the weekly Standard

SEPTEMBER 8, 1997

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the weekly Standard

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The Audit Bureau Member

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The Appease China Sweepstakes (cont.)

When it comes to making nice with the butchers of Beijing, there's plenty of competition. With his interview in the Aug. 17 *New York Times Magazine*, Philip Murray Condit, chairman and CEO of Boeing, gives our earlier appeasement laureates—California Sen. Dianne Feinstein and Georgetown professor James Feinerman—a run for the money. Feinstein, you may recall, proposed a U.S.-Chinese commission to study human-rights failures in the two countries—"both Tiananmen Square and Kent State," as she memorably put it. Feinerman, for his part, was quoted in the *Washington Post* as being much impressed with the similarities of U.S. and Chinese prisons. He maintained that we are hypocrites to criticize the Chinese gulag while American prisoners stamp out license plates.

Comes now Boeing honcho Condit, who is asked by the *Times* interviewer Claudia Dreifus whether he has any "feelings about human rights violations in China." Says Condit: "Oh, yeah, absolutely. And I'm going to put it in context: they are the same ones that I have about human rights violations in the United States." Dreifus is so taken aback that she asks a followup question not often seen in the *Times:*

"Q: Wait a second. Americans do live in a democracy. We get to vote for our political leaders, and we aren't shot down in the streets, as the demonstrators in Tiananmen Square were.

"A: Well, not in the same way. But . . . some of the struggles we've had with civil rights don't look all that shiny. People have been shot. People have been beaten. I happened to be in China during the Rodney King beating. . . ."

Quick—somebody get this man some new talking points.

Then again, Condit is a piker compared to his peaceable northern neighbors at British Columbia's University of Victoria, who decided last month to award an honorary degree to Jiang Zemin, president of China and, famously, killer of university students. Showing better judgment than his appeasers, Jiang turned it down.

The Way of the Weld

William Weld's campaign to become the next U.S. ambassador to Mexico is set to enter a new phase. Sources told the *Boston Herald* last week that the former governor plans to scrap his "quiet diplomacy" and start "making noise again."

Those sources sound an awful lot like the governor himself: Only someone with Weld's trademark sense of humor could describe his efforts to date as "quiet diplomacy." Weld, of course, was the one who in mid-July broke with diplomatic protocol and staged a press conference where he blasted Jesse Helms, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, accusing him of playing politics with the nomination and charging him with "ideological extortion."

And it's doubtful more noise will help him now. Paul Coverdell, chairman of the Foreign Relations subcommittee with oversight of Mexico, came out against the nomination last week, citing the political nature of the appointment and Weld's inexperience in diplomatic matters. Other Senate Republicans are expected to follow Coverdell, and neither Helms nor Trent Lott, the Senate GOP leader, has given any indication of wavering. Nor has there been any signal from Senate Democrats that they want to wage war over Weld.

Weld's desperation is such that he's floated the idea of a "recess" appointment, which would allow him to serve as ambassador without being confirmed, though his tenure would expire at the end of 1998. Only one problem with that idea: The White House has already promised Lott not to pursue this option. Having just completed two weeks of intensive Spanish lessons, Weld can probably grasp what all of this adds up to: *Hasta la vista*, baby.

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Scrapbook

Another Boston Monument

In late August, Mayor Thomas Menino of Boston placed an expiatory statue of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti—the two professed anarchists electrocuted for their part in a 1920 robbery-murder in southeastern Massachusetts—in front of its public library. The sculpture is by Gutzon Borglum, designer of Mount Rushmore. It's the second step in an ugly episode of Bay State revisionism: In 1977, on the 50th anniversary of the execution, Massachusetts's new governor, Michael Dukakis, issued an official apology. (An apology that was promptly condemned in a vote of the state senate.)

The trial was not American justice at its best. The negative publicity surrounding the two anarchists did owe much to the Red Scare climate opportunistically created by U.S. attorney general Mitchell Palmer. Judge Webster Thayer was publicly skeptical about their innocence, describing them as "anarchistic bastards." But Vanzetti was almost certainly guilty, and Sacco was guilty beyond a shadow of a doubt, as the work of historian Francis Russell makes clear. No evidence has arisen since their deaths to diminish that certainty.

A governor's commission of inquiry upheld the verdict. Many of those who offered alibis for the two were subsequently shown to have been anarchist comrades who falsified and coordinated their stories. A 1962 re-running of forensic tests from the trial showed that the physical evidence against the pair was even stronger than previously suspected.

Even if Menino's intent is to glorify a couple of murderers, they're not the proper subjects of the sculpture. The real "honors" should go to those Communist historians whose misrepresentation of the Sacco/Vanzetti affair over the decades has made this travesty possible.

A Charter to Nowhere

Charter schools, publicly funded but independent of local school officials, run on a shoestring. They receive, on average, 80 to 90 percent of the funding that regular public schools get. So what is the Clinton administration doing to help? Not pressing states to provide fuller funding for charter schools. It's convening a conference in Washington in November that will eat up hundreds of thousands of dollars in federal charter-school money.

Who's coming? Education officials from every state, many of whom loathe charter schools, and representatives of at least 300 of the 491 charter schools currently functioning. Many of these same people have gotten together often in the past year at 10 privately funded conferences on charter schools. Those gatherings, however, weren't geared for exploitation by Clinton administration officials eager to play up their supposed attachment to a popular education reform they would probably rather see fail.

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Casual

WHAT A DUMP!

A high point of my summer vacation was a long-anticipated visit to the sculpture garden at the San Francisco dump.

A while back, my West Coast sister, Colette, became artist-in-residence at the dump, working with recycled materials. She sent pictures of some of her creations. I was especially taken with the masks she made when her patron, the waste-management company Norcal, joined in the Chinese New Year parade. It was the Year of the Rat.

"You might expect a garbage company to be a little sensitive on the subject of rats," she told me. Not a bit of it. In the parade, Norcal employees pushed trash carts filled with their own offspring outfitted unapologetically as rodents. Colette made 40 inspired rat masks using scavenged flourescent paint and new paper plates. They were a hit, and Norcal asked her back for the Year of the Ox. True to form, she confected a gigantic ox head, bright red with golden horns, to adorn the front of a vintage garbage truck.

Pictures are fine and masks are fantastic, but I wanted to see the major works that came out of this artistic tenure. I imagined whimsical constructions along the lines of the driftwood sculptures down by the freeway in my own long-ago Berkeley days. It was hard to square that notion, though, with the news that one of Colette's dump pieces had been bought as lobby art by a downtown software firm. I was more curious than ever when I heard that her most ambitious work would be installed in a permanent outdoor setting. Two weeks ago, I finally got the chance to see it for myself.

The dump is at the southeast edge of San Francisco, near Candlestick Park, and to reach the sculpture garden you have to drive all the way through it. The area where potential recyclables are collected—where the artists make most of their finds—isn't bad, but even a glimpse inside the vast shed where seagulls pick over mountains of household waste is unnerving. This is mercifully out of sight by the time you reach your hidden and ingeniously landscaped destination.

A bronze plaque announces the Sanitary Fill Company's River of Hopes and Dreams Sculpture Garden, dedicated in May 1993. The work of the artists-in-residence, it says, "challenges old habits and raises awareness of environmental priorities concerning waste minimizing, re-use and recycling."

This message is underscored by the two most conspicuous works. "River of Hopes and Dreams" is a shapeless heap of rough boulders from which flows a meandering cement stream painted swimming-pool blue. Nearby, a teardrop perhaps 10 feet high made of now-dingy bottles—"Earth Tear"—has slumped over on its side.

Continue along the pathway, though, and the prospect brightens. The path's gravel, incidentally, is made from the freeway that collapsed in the Loma Prieta earthquake. A variety of trees and shrubs, and banks of daisies, lavender, and lily of the Nile, appear to be thriving.

In among the greenery, you come upon the charming and aptly named "Ball Gown," fashioned out of heavy metal screens. The artist, Estelle Akamine, I'm told specializes in costumes, both as art works and as actual attire; one ensemble is made out of electrical wire and another is festooned with audiotape fringe.

Then there is Jim Growder's "Triton," a trio of metal sculptures. Tall and thin, vaguely manlike, or tool-like, evoking an oar, a pitchfork, and an elongated butterfly, they are elegant and spare. Growder now is employed at the dump, in charge of sorting metal for recycling.

All the way at the back, you come at last to the work by Colette Crutcher. To my unbiased eye, it is the *pièce de résistance*: a rounded arch over seven feet high sheltering two lesser arches of different heights, titled "Mother and Child." It is covered in a swirling, leafy mosaic made of tile and mirror and painted glass, a gorgeous blaze of red, blue, and turquoise-green. When you look at it closely, you see that some of the pieces of glass have been stenciled inside—all with paints and patterned objects recovered at the dump.

Strolling back to the car through the deserted garden, I wondered how well it accomplishes the stated purpose. It isn't advertised or open to the public because of liability concerns. Every now and then a company function is held there, and schoolchildren on educational tours of the dump are brought by.

Most of the time, though, it's empty. Few San Franciscans even know it's there. In refuse-and-recycling circles, it must be a small plus for morale, a mini-PR coup for Norcal; and of course it's that admirable rarity, a source of temporary work for a handful of struggling artists.

At bottom, though, it's something else, too, this art-out-of-offal enterprise. I, at least, like to think of those sculptures—that dazzling arch and the others—standing there, even unseen by any but the gulls, in silent tribute to man the contriver, man the beauty-maker.

CLAUDIA WINKLER

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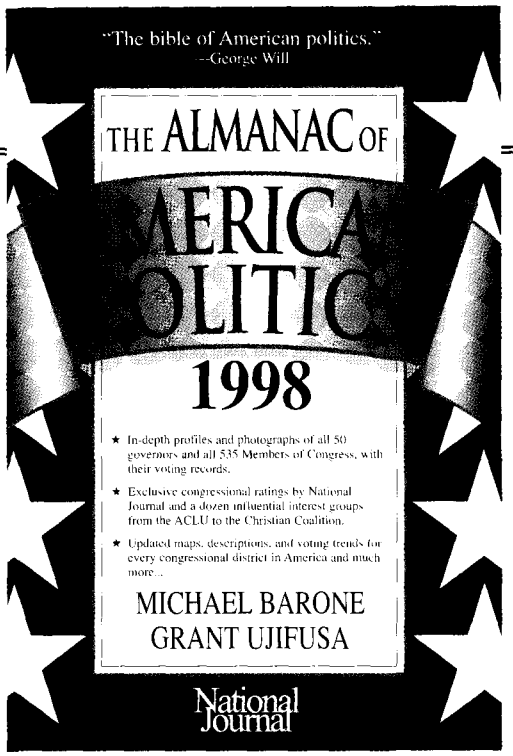

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National Journal

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Grown Soft at Century's End

David Brooks's "Summer Camp at Century's End" (Aug. 18) reminded me of Bill Cosby's comedy routine recorded on an early '60s record, *Wonderfulness*. Cosby jokes that when he was a child, parents were trying to murder their children. He notes how the grownups replaced the vacant lots in which he played, covered with broken bricks and shattered glass, with modern playground equipment. I laughed myself silly when I first heard the record as a kid. Now, at age 40, I almost weep at the obsessive lengths to which modern parents go in order to protect their children from even the most remote chance of injury.

In the long run, I don't think such overprotectiveness is good for children. Sure, we can protect Junior's fragile psyche by downplaying competition and failing to distiguish between winning and losing. But what happens when he gets older, having not learned the lessons of competition? He scratches his head wondering why he can't get into medical school with a B minus average. He is puzzled when his boss doesn't hand out identical paychecks to the employees. It wasn't like this at summer camp! "Protecting" Junior is a fine way of mortgaging his future, rendering him incompetent to deal with the realities of life. Is it any wonder that more and more adult children are moving back in with Mom and Pop?

BRIAN J. FEICHO
LAWRENCEBURG, IN

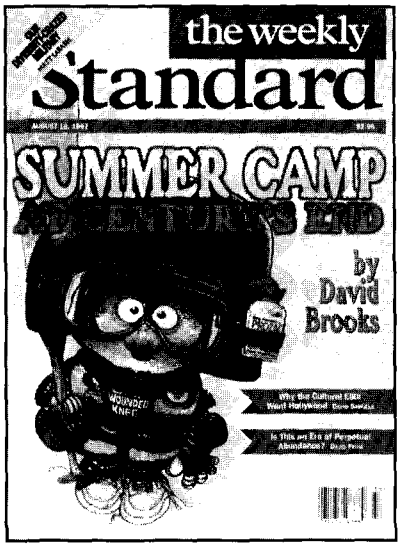
David Brooks rightly criticizes the ever-increasing role of petty safety regulations in our culture. Unfortunately, he makes little effort to question the moral permissiveness that has helped to produce this environment. Instead, he nostalgically glorifies the lax and sometimes hostile attitudes many had toward morality during the '60s and '70s. As a result, he overlooks one of the great truths of history. When a society abandons its commitment to moral behavior, it opens the door for government to trample upon its freedoms. It appears that as a nation we are destined to learn this the hard way.

ANDREW ACKERMAN
BOWLING GREEN, OH

Diversity Gulag

Matt Labash's article ("The Diversity-Crazed Military," Aug. 18) took me back 20 years to my own brush with gender and racial reeducation during plebe summer at the United States Naval Academy. Sad to say, things apparently haven't changed much.

The academy's 1977 version of the reeducation process began with a harangue about the white male power structure by someone who would now be called an African-American diversity consultant, although that phrase wasn't in use at the time. Each platoon gathered later for a breakout session, during which it became clear that the desired outcome was for us to confess our racial



and gender guilt.

Labash's article reveals that the essence of the military's "diversity" programs hasn't changed in 20 years. Facts didn't matter then, and they don't matter now. Subjective and often ignorant perceptions trump facts when the former support the premise of the reeducation effort and the latter undermine it. Truly diverse individuals are lumped into racial and gender stereotypes in the name of battling pernicious racial and gender stereotypes. Diversity training was, and is, a game of "gotcha!" more appropriate to the gulag than to the training of the defenders of a free people.

CRAIG PIRRONG
WEBSTER GROVES, MO

I read Matt Labash's article with growing horror. The purpose of all this multiculturalism is to exaggerate the importance of race beyond the already inflated significance it holds in society. Sure, it creates a cottage industry for the diversity consultants, but at what cost? It obviously exacerbates racial tension and demeans people for the color of their skin.

We are far more similar to each other than we can ever be dissimilar, and yet the difference in skin color causes some people to believe the opposite. Instead of teaching this obvious fact, the multiculturalists feed and nurture the seed of prejudice, and it blooms into full-grown, mature racism.

The Democratic party wrote the segregationist laws of yore that fostered an atmosphere conducive to lynching blacks. It now promotes the metaphorical lynching of whites. This is not so much a political sea-change as it is a minor alteration within the same racist process.

DAVID BAKER
NEW YORK, NY

Your magazine is fantastic. I found Matt Labash's latest piece most shocking. Please, tell me it was fiction! I didn't know whether to laugh or cry. The contrast between John Hillen's no-nonsense sobriety and the incomprehensible buffoonery of the trainers was hysterical! Thank you all, especially you, Matt, for being so good at what you do.

PHILIP TATLER
FALMOUTH, VA

Bill's Bad Bill

Fred Barnes is intent on proving that President Clinton's 1993 deficit-reduction package has little or nothing to do with the strong economy America enjoys today ("No Credit to Bill," Aug. 19). His argument might have some credibility if Mr. Barnes were willing to admit that he was dead wrong four years ago about the likely economic impact of that plan.

Here's what Mr. Barnes told television viewers on *The McLaughlin Group* on Aug. 6, 1993: "[The 1993 budget bill] obviously hurts the economy. Practically no one believes that this is going to help the economy. Members of

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the administration know it's contradictory, which means it will slow growth, impede job creation . . . It's based on a theory that is ridiculous. The theory is that lowering the deficit, shrinking the deficit will lower interest rates. So this bill is very bad."

Nearly 13 million new jobs later, the lowest unemployment rate in 24 years and a deficit over 85 percent smaller, a *mea culpa* might be in order. Apparently not. I guess five years of low inflation, low unemployment, strong growth, and plunging deficits obscure one's memory.

RAHM EMANUEL
WASHINGTON, DC

PROVOCATEUR HELMS

Fred Barnes's paean to Jesse Helms ("The Ascendancy of Jesse Helms," Aug. 11) is historically deficient on several grounds.

First, how is it possible to consider Helms's career without mentioning race? Barnes says Helms attacks liberal icons "even if it rubs racial sensitivities." What a gloss! His exploitation of the issue explains, more than any other factor, Jesse's rise in politics. This is the real "dirty little secret" in Washington. It is ill disguised in his stance on job discrimination, the death penalty, the U.N., and welfare, not to mention his disregard of Africa. Make no mistake about it: The strong bias is there, and only the blind cannot see it.

Barnes makes note of Marc Thiessen's comments concerning the Weld ambassadorial nomination and makes a virtue out of Helms's silence. The reason Jesse will not say anything is because it *is* a feud—a case of petty revenge because Weld didn't endorse Helms as Foreign Relations chairman. Views on drugs are incidental; even ideology takes a back seat. Helms is notorious for blackballing nominees who have crossed him. Throughout his Senate career, Helms has become a specialist in hostage-taking as a way of settling scores—with the merits of the case having little to do with it.

Moreover, it's a joke for Helms to be quoted as spewing Latin at a Boston reporter—as if this proves some sort of intellectual superiority! There is a very good reason Helms grants few interviews and will not go on the major political talk shows: He is smart enough to know that his intellect and temper cannot handle tough questioning. He is the most undereducated and least-traveled chairman of modern times. Time and again, he has displayed xenophobic—not just isolationist—traits.

Barnes edges nearer to facts and away from idolatry when he describes the price the Republican party pays for having "a polarizer, a provocateur" as chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. The idea of a coherent Republican foreign policy is being sabotaged by the likes of Helms. Never in the post-World War II era have the Senate Republican leadership and key committee chairmen possessed so little personal experience in world affairs.

In sum, Jesse Helms is not capable of a large vision of U.S. leadership in the world. In foreign policy, he is a unilateral isolationist, not an assertive Reaganite. Vigorous debate and illumination of issues are simply not going to occur in Helms's committee.

Try as he might, Barnes cannot turn a frog's skin into a silk purse. A "conservative with a stiffened spine"? "Implacability equals strength"? Emerson says it best: "A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds—adored by little statesmen."

WILLIAM E. JACKSON JR.
DAVIDSON, NC

FUTURE CROCK

I agree with David Price that the future isn't what it used to be ("The Future Is Now?," Aug. 18). Anybody seen any video phones or rocket belts lately?

What I notice most, however, is the lack of long-promised underwater cities. Back in the '50s and '60s, we baby-boomers were told that one day cities would grace the world's oceans, with beautiful, glittering skyscrapers under crystalline domes, and gorgeous models of both sexes swimming around.

Instead, we've gotten very occasional, very temporary underwater-research stations—cramped, wiry metal tubs in which middle-aged scientists dress like slobs, and the helium-oxygen air makes them talk like Donald Duck.

JOHN LOCKWOOD
WASHINGTON, DC

PALESTINIAN DARLINGS

David Twersky's "Clinton's Mideast Complex" (Aug. 18) is informative, but it fails to address the big picture. The key dynamic of U.S. foreign policy in this region is nothing more than an effort to shore up liberal support for the Palestinians against the conservative Jewish state. Despite its posturing, this administration has aligned itself with the Palestinians because they are the darlings of the Left. Israel, especially with Netanyahu in power, is simply not politically correct.

It is clearly in the Palestianians' best interests to delay substantive negotiations because the Left, led by the press, will slowly erode Israel's position. In fact, the only thing that will satisfy the Palestinians is Israel's extinction.

Geography cannot be ignored when considering the Left's ridiculous concept of land for peace. The fact is that Israel is a country that is approximately the size of New Jersey. What land is there to trade? There is plenty of land for a Palestinian state in the Middle East, but not in Israel. The fact is, the Palestinians don't want a homeland. They want the death of Israel.

Establishing autonomous Palestinian areas within Israel is a prescription for failure. By their very nature, autonomous areas are destabilizing. They become pockets of poverty and breeding grounds for terrorists, and tend to foster claims of economic injustice. The U.S. position should be that Israel, with its current borders, is a fact of life. The sooner we acknowledge this, the sooner peace, enforced if necessary by bayonnet, can become a reality.

JAMES D. PIDD
TUCSON, AZ

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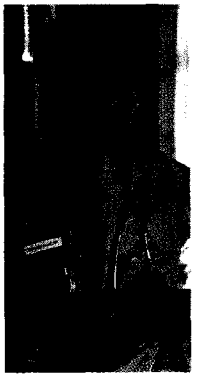
Puerto Rico: A place in the United States where health care reform is already working.

In 1993, Puerto Rico embarked on one of the boldest and most ambitious public policy reforms ever undertaken in the United States. The plan was to ensure that every citizen, regardless of income, would have access to high quality health care. Today, Puerto Rico is well on the way to achieving that goal.

Four years ago, half of our citizens depended on the government for health care. Now, as the government controlled health system is transferred to privately managed health care companies, those same people are able to select doctors and hospitals for themselves.



Increasingly, Puerto Rico is a picture of good health. Thanks to privatization, clinics and hospitals across the island are improving services and training as they compete for patients. Private sector health care companies are providing better insurance services at a lower cost and with greater efficiency, and the ratio of patients to primary care physicians has fallen dramatically.

No wonder that just one year after its implementation, over 93 percent of the participants preferred the new private health insurance system over the previous system managed by the government. And by 1999, virtually every Puerto Rican citizen will be covered by health insurance.

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Puerto Rico

WHERE GREAT IDEAS ARE BEING PUT TO WORK

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the weekly Standard

Testing Time in Bosnia

For the first time in more than a year, the prospects for a successful, lasting, and even a relatively just peace in Bosnia have improved. In recent weeks, one indicted war criminal was captured by NATO troops, and another was killed trying to resist capture. Meanwhile, the Bosnian Serbs, hitherto united in their opposition to the Dayton peace plan and NATO's efforts to enforce it, have sharply divided under pressure from the United States and its allies. Last week about half of the leadership of the Bosnian Serb military threw their support to Bosnian Serb president Biljana Plavsic, the one-time stooge of indicted war criminal Radovan Karadzic. She is now, with the full and forceful backing of NATO, maneuvering to strip Karadzic of his power. Municipal and political leaders, chiefly in the western portion of Bosnian Serb territory, have also begun rallying to Plavsic. Or to put it more accurately, these and many thousands of civilian Bosnian Serbs are now throwing in their lot with NATO and the Dayton peace process. As one Bosnian Serb politician told a reporter last week, "It seems that [President Plavsic] has the support of the world. That's why so many people support her." The recent flexing of NATO muscle—diplomatic, economic, and military—has had the predictable effect of emboldening those in the region who want to join the West and take part in the Dayton process, and isolating those who do not.

It's too early for celebration, but it is worth noting what can be accomplished with just a little bold leadership. A scant three months ago, the NATO mission in Bosnia looked to be in an irrecoverable nose dive. The mighty NATO peacekeeping force was hunkered down in its bunkers, fearful that even the smallest effort to implement the Dayton accord would provoke a deadly assault by Karadzic's thugs. Encouraged by NATO's palpable fear of conflict, Karadzic and his gang not only roamed free but looked to be succeeding in sabotaging U.S. and NATO policy—by violently preventing the return of refugees, undermining international efforts at political and economic reconstruction in Bosnia, and preparing for the next phase of the war, which would begin the moment NATO troops departed.

In the United States, Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen, a staunch opponent of the Bosnia mission, was courting congressional favor by promising a prompt withdrawal by the June 1998 "deadline" regardless of the consequences. The Republican-led Congress, guided by the likes of John Kasich, was voting for various resolutions requiring the certain withdrawal of U.S. troops next summer or even earlier. Our NATO allies, following Washington's "lead," were falling over one another in a scramble to prepare for the inevitable retreat. And President Clinton was fiddling while his Bosnia policy burned.

The credit for turning this pending disaster into a possible success goes to Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, who went toe-to-toe with Cohen in an intra-administration battle and won; to the new presidential envoy, Robert S. Gelbard, a tough career diplomat who devised a strategy aimed at success and then set about knocking heads both in Washington and in the Balkans; to the new NATO commander, Gen. Wesley Clark, who gave approval for NATO troops to take charge in Bosnia; and to British prime minister Tony Blair, who took the biggest risks in approving the recent operations, since it was British troops who did the most dangerous work.

But as Churchill once said, this is not the beginning of the end, it is only the end of the beginning. Even the newly invigorated NATO has achieved no more than 10 percent of what needs to be accomplished to make a lasting Bosnian peace possible. And it is far-fetched to think that the other 90 percent—which includes smashing Karadzic's power once and for all and then creating a sustainable system of interethnic cooperation in Bosnia—can be accomplished before the artificial "deadline" of June 1998. The orchestrated mob violence in Brcko last week showed that NATO's present course is not without risk.

Indeed, the great danger now is that, having stepped forward and asserted a clear determination to make the Dayton peace process work, the United

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States and its allies will pull back, return to the bunkers, and hope that this brief burst of energy was enough to avert a total failure. This was NATO's disastrous pattern of behavior in the years before Dayton—a little boldness, a little progress, followed by long periods of hopeful timidity that undid all the gains and seriously eroded NATO's credibility.

What is required in the weeks and months ahead are two things, both of them hard. First, NATO troops need to act even more aggressively to accelerate the present momentum, even though this means a higher risk of casualties. They need to continue trying to snatch war criminals and increase their efforts to make it safe for refugees to return to their homes. Above all, NATO needs to make it clear to those Bosnian Serbs who have recently shifted allegiance that they made the right move and joined the winning team. We need to make it clear, not just to Bosnians but to the world, that it's much safer to be our friend than our enemy. And we need to act to ensure that this is, in fact, true.

Second, within the next few weeks President Clinton should state clearly that he intends to keep U.S. troops in Bosnia after June 1998 if, as seems likely, their continued presence is necessary to a durable peace. While he's at it, the president might want to take a moment from his millennial bridge-building to explain to the American people, in a serious and sustained way, why it's vital that the United States stay the course in Bosnia, even if it means casualties. This is a real test of whether Bill Clinton is willing to take seriously his responsibility to shape American foreign policy. Is it too much to expect of the commander in chief that he rise to this occasion?

Such a presidential statement now, given recent events in Bosnia, would be worth two armored divisions. For many months, the perception in the Balkans that the United States was "short of breath," a perception Cohen encouraged last spring, has been a blessing for Karadzic and a curse for his would-be challengers. Now is the time to reverse the psychology by making it clear that Karadzic and Co. cannot simply wait out the clock.

Would Republicans in Congress have the good strategic sense—and the good political instinct—to back this more aggressive approach? This is a testing time for them, too. The track record of the congressional GOP has not been encouraging. While Madeleine Albright talks these days of the lessons of Munich and the dangers of appeasement, stealing a page from Ronald Reagan and George Bush, many congressional Republicans, stealing a page from the 1970s-'80s Democratic Left, seem to prefer to talk about Vietnam and the danger of "quagmires." Twice in the past two years, Republicans have flirted with the idea of driving themselves off a cliff by voting to cut off funding for our troops deployed abroad. The first time, in 1996, they were saved by Bob Dole and John McCain. This year, before the summer recess, the House approved a binding resolution to require a cut-off of funds for Bosnia after June 1998. The Senate's companion measure, though still fundamentally wrong-headed, at least is non-binding. We trust the GOP leadership will insist that the Senate version prevail in conference this month.

But the GOP Congress could do more than avoid this self-inflicted calamity. Republicans could jettison their newly acquired defeatist, neo-isolationist impulses in foreign policy. They could become once again the party of Ronald Reagan. This is the right thing to do. And it is politically smart. Has no one in the party noticed that the GOP attempt, now almost five years old, to be more cautious, more fretful, more pessimistic about the use of American power abroad than Clinton, has manifestly failed to help Republicans? It's time to change direction sharply, and Bosnia is a good place to start. We'd like to see some gutsy Republican introduce a resolution endorsing an extension of the June 1998 "deadline," even before the president summons the courage to ask for it. And we'd like to see some Republican presidential candidate propose such a measure. It would be politically risky—but risk-taking in the spirit of Reagan is better than timid sniping in the tradition of McGovern. Will anyone step forward to pick up the Reagan mantle? ♦

Spanking the Anti-Spankers

by Andrew Peyton Thomas

Few news items are surer to gain approving attention from the media elite than social-science studies that challenge traditional child-rearing practices. So it was that on August 15, newspapers nationwide trumpeted the findings of one Murray A. Straus, sociologist at the University of New Hampshire and sworn enemy of corporal punishment.

The stories summarized Straus's forthcoming article in the American Medical Association's *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*, co-authored by David

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B. Sugarman and Jean Giles Sims. Seeking to one-up the standard critics of spanking, Straus contends that the practice not only fails to improve a child's conduct, but makes things worse. He found that children ages 6 to 9 whose mothers spanked them were more likely than their non-spanked counterparts to engage in antisocial behavior like bullying, lying, and cheating.

Some methodological flaws in this analysis are glaring. In choosing to track only 6-to-9-year-olds, Straus skews his study away from the group most likely to acquire the wisdom of the ages by occasionally having their rumps reddened—namely, younger children. Parents who are still spanking their children as late as 9 are likely to be inept parents—or to come from the very socioeconomic classes that, for reasons including family structure, disproportionately rear antisocial juveniles.

Excluding from the spanked group children whose *fathers* administered the swats further tips the sample away from intact families. Straus's victims of corporal punishment might well have been even more antisocial if denied whatever spankings they received from their overwhelmed mothers.

This methodological shortcoming proved too obvious even for the publisher to ignore. In a companion article that followed Straus's analysis, Marjorie Lindner Cunnoe and Carrie Lea Mariner criticized Straus's failure to control properly for "family structure and other demographic variables." Their own study, controlling for such factors, found "no evidence" to support Straus's "universal anti-spanking stance."

Equally blatant, Straus's findings are not even news. Straus has been saying the same thing with various co-authors since 1991. And he is straightforward about his aims. He is determined to launch a crusade to stamp out corporal punishment, to the point of cooking up specious social science for the cause.

Consider his 1993 broadside against corporal punishment in the journal *Youth & Society*. Straus declares spanking an "assault" on children comparable to domestic violence against women. He also makes this priceless contribution to the *Murphy Brown* debate: "Children living with both parents are usually thought of as having an advantage over children in single-parent households. Although this is correct in many ways, the results of this study show that having two parents increases the probability of an adolescent being hit." In short, "two parents may mean double jeopardy for adolescents in the United States."

Such bold formulations pop up frequently in Straus's anti-spanking opus, the 1994 book *Beating the Devil Out of Them: Corporal Punishment in American Families*. "Good science tends to be a labor of love," Straus writes at the beginning of his preface. "Unfortunately, my love is mostly unrequited." He complains that few agree with his position that spanking is *per se* child abuse, although he cites a 1986 survey of 31 widely read parental-advice books showing that 70 percent either discouraged corporal punishment or did not mention it.

"A labor of love is not dispassionate," Straus continues. "Therefore, it is appropriate to confront the old false belief that deep value commitments are incompatible with objective science." He would like to return to a time, before the Age of Reason, when science was the handmaiden of a sacred cause—theology then, political correctness now. Allying his "humanitarian values" with his "commitment to the scientific method," he unabashedly seeks to snuff out the "ancient evil" of spanking. For "ending corporal punishment," he writes, "is one of the most important steps to achieving a less violent world." The family, for its part, is the "cradle of violence."

Corporal punishment causes so many social ills, Straus hardly knows where to begin. He settles on the old "violence begets violence" chestnut. Corporal punishment, he asserts, leads to a higher murder rate. Both spring from a "culture of violence." "Children learn from corporal punishment the script to follow for almost all violence." And widespread corporal punishment produces public support for troglodytic social policies, such as "capital punishment of murderers, prison terms for drug use, punitively low welfare payments, or bombing raids to punish countries that support terrorists."

Straus's catalogue of woes linked to corporal punishment includes a kinky chapter alleging a connection between spanking and sadomasochism. Sexuality, he says, is rooted in human "lovemaps." These are the mental templates that determine what a person finds erotic and pleasurable. Spanking can "vandalize" these lovemaps and make one prone to sadomasochism. Straus offers little solace to parents who spank with noble intentions: "Our research so far suggests that when corporal punishment is combined with love, masochism is the result." Straus quotes the diagnostic manual of the American Psychiatric Association, which brands masochistic sex "not part of normative arousal-activity patterns," though he sidesteps the question of why this behavior is worse than other forms of consensual deviance now deemed a civil right by many on the left.

Straus argues that corporal punishment leads to increased risk of depression, lower economic status, and even "lack of internalized moral standards." The condescension is palpable when Straus takes up the strong support for corporal punishment among black Americans: A Gallup poll this year found that 83 percent of blacks favor spanking children. Straus mentions the defense of corporal punishment offered by

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black social scientists Elijah Anderson and Charles Willie but makes no attempt to do justice to their work, merely quoting one as saying, "I was whupped, and I'm OK." He brushes these scholars' views aside with the ahistorical assertion that corporal punishment—a nearly universal human custom—became "part of black culture in response to slavery and oppression." He further opines that "the continuation of that aspect of black culture interferes with progress towards equality."

Anderson and Willie are not the only experts defending corporal punishment. In his 1993 review of four major longitudinal studies of the relationship between spanking and antisocial aggression, Robert E. Larzelere found an average correlation of "about .00." His own study in 1991 found that corporal punishment, when combined with reasoning, was a more effective method of discipline than reasoning alone.

Social science, of course, is unlikely to settle the debate over corporal punishment. Attacks on this venerable practice are heating up. States from Washington to Pennsylvania have or are considering restrictions on parental spanking. Religious conservatives have counterattacked by proposing parental-rights amendments to state constitutions to preserve, among other things, the prerogative to spank. Such amendments are not the result of paranoia, as their opponents charge. The Scandinavian countries and Austria have already outlawed corporal punishment of children. And our activist judiciary poses a constant threat to coin such a "right" for children. While two-thirds of Americans told Gallup this year that they approve of spanking—and 90 percent of parents admit spanking their toddlers on occasion—the number of Americans supportive of the practice has fallen, from 94 percent in 1968 to 65 percent today.

Straus and the parenting experts who reflexively denounce spanking on *Oprah* have found a receptive audience. Today's harried young parents are reluctant to let the business of proper discipline ruin their "quality time" with their children. Even so, half-baked social science cannot erase our innate knowledge that sometimes nothing less than corporal punishment commands the awe and attention of rebellious children, especially boys. With out-of-control juveniles increasingly fueling our social problems, the last thing we need is to remove from parents' store of punishments one that has checked children successfully through the ages.

Andrew Peyton Thomas is deputy counsel to the governor of Arizona.

CLINTON'S MILLENNIUM

by James W. Ceaser

"*STUPOR MUNDI*" (Wonder of the World)—thus was young Otto III greeted in 996 when the pope selected him emperor in Rome. As fate chose Otto as its instrument to lead Western Christendom past the first millennium, so Bill Clinton has assumed the burden of carrying humankind over the threshold to the second millennium. Possessed of a keen sense of history—Clinton is, after all, author of the recent *Between Hope and History*—the president plans to tackle the millennium aggressively and proactively. At a huge ceremony last month at the National Archives, Clinton declared: "The millennium has arrived. . . . We are present at the future, a moment we must now define for ourselves and our children." The fact that the era of Big Government may be over is no excuse for an administration to shun its obligation to determine the meaning of History.

Just as Otto solicited the help of his trusted mentor, Pope Sylvester II, to prepare for the first millennium, President Clinton is turning to the first lady, Hillary Rodham Clinton. Mrs. Clinton will head up a "Program for the Millennium" to be run from the White House. The program, according to the *Washington Post*, will "oversee preparations along the lines of those leading up to the nation's bicentennial in 1976," with conferences, historical restorations, artistic displays, scientific exhibitions, and plans to double the size of AmeriCorps. Especially creative local projects will earn their town the White House's designation of "Millennium Community."

The new millennium, as recast by Mrs. Clinton, will be celebrated in a spirit that allows us "to appreciate our common heritage and rejoice in our creativity." As the second millennium has become a secular event, so it is also preeminently American. The center of the universal world power, as Hegel noted more than a century ago, has been moving steadily over the ages from East to West—from China, to India, to Rome, and now to the United States. Who can doubt that the real events of the millennium—the ones receiving full coverage by CNN and CBS—will be taking place in America, right here in Washington and New York?

With the federal government setting the tone, and with the millennium grant program often footing the

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bill, the buildup to 2000 by other cultural institutions is certain to involve activities no less thoughtful than those sponsored by the White House. At the Grammys in 1999, expect a Best Song of the Millennium by Male Artists or Castrati. (Nominees: Gregorian chants, vocalists unknown; Mozart's *Requiem*, original version; "Beat It," Michael Jackson.) At the Oscars, there will be a Best Original Screenplay of the Millennium (William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*; Jean Baptiste Racine, *Britannicus*; Steven Spielberg, *ET*). Best Musical Score Accompanying a Full-length Feature Presentation (Giacomo Puccini, *Turandot*; Richard Wagner, *Tristan und Isolde*; Barbra Streisand, *The Way We Were*). *Time*, of course, will have its Person of the Millennium (JFK), and the *Capital Gang*'s crew of pundits will chip in with the Outrage of the Millennium (the Children's Crusade, the Thirty-Years War, Iran-Contra).

This reflection is to be the prelude to the grand celebrations planned for New Year's Eve 1999. As the fateful moment approaches, look for President Clinton, as the "nation's chief bridge builder," to play impresario to this transition. A slightly older, grayer, and more statesmanlike figure—on the eve, so to speak, of his retirement from office and his return to Hope—will be passing the keys to his successor, assuring the continuity of Civilization and Time. The whole event, from the raucous party in Times Square to a quiet commemoration of a representative hamlet in Delaware, will be summed up by Dan Rather, in that no-nonsense, down-to-earth style all have come to know: "It's been quite a millennium, folks, some bad moments, sure, but some good ones too."

Even by Washington's standards, where a "profoundly historic event" is said to occur about once every month, the millennium promises to stand out as a rarity. After all, we have had only one millennium before this one, and a prudent person might entertain doubts if there will ever be a third. So history can only judge between 1000 and 2000. From the limited accounts available of the first millennium, Otto III's national millennium program was designed to counteract a widespread sense of foreboding and doom. According to the great chronicler of the millennium, Rodulfus Glaber (980-1046), signs were viewed everywhere as ominous portents of the end of the world, as foretold in the book of Revelation. Others report that on the dreaded New Years's Eve of 999, a huge crowd assembled in Rome expecting the Last Judgment. But even those like Glaber, who all along doubted this populist eschatology, saw the millennium as a moment in which man stood under God's judgment and was to take stock of things. In verses he composed for the occasion, Glaber wrote:

> A thousand years since the Lord was born on earth of a Virgin,
> Men act with the gravest of errors. . . .
> Our people now mock past generations,
> Mixing pleasure and debauchery.
> They fear not scandal and scorn serious matters. . . .
> The Republic groans under soft rule.
> If God's great pity did not delay His wrath,
> Hell would engulf us in its frightful mouth.

Happily, our millennium is not in the grips of Glaberite gloom and doom. We are in control of things, and, as President Clinton assured us, we can "imagine the future." It is our millennium to fashion just as we want—for our children. This hopeful view is

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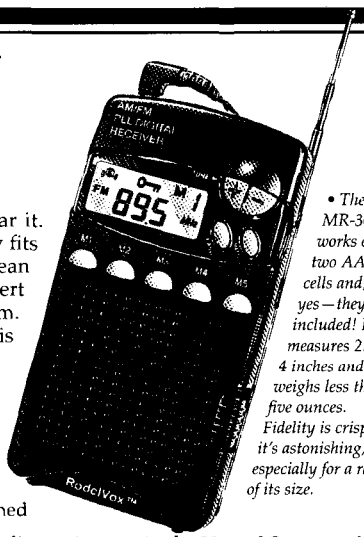

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by no means the intellectual property of the Clintons alone, but is characteristic of the thinking of much of their opposition on the right. A Jack Kemp in the White House would be using the occasion to push for Millennium Enterprise Zones to guarantee hope, growth, and opportunity until 3000. The Clintons, in fact, have adopted a historical narrative with the appearance of greater depth, using race and racism as elements of pathos to be overcome in a struggle for human dignity. The great story of the millennium, as the Clintons tell it, is the battle to recognize and celebrate our diversity. By contrast, much of the modern Right seeks to overcome nothing, unless it is higher marginal tax rates. Whichever of these easy versions, left or right, prevails in Washington, it is unlikely to lead the way to an American millennium. Without a genuine sense of the tragic—of the fragility and yet the possibility of things—there can be no preparation for greatness.

It is not, of course, that Americans face no challenges at the end of the millennium. As the president said, we have a particularly great problem, which he is prepared to confront head on. Can we prevail? "I want to assure the American people that the federal government is taking steps to prevent any interruption in government services that rely on the functioning of federal computer systems." *Stupor Mundi!*

James W. Ceaser is professor of government and foreign affairs at the University of Virginia and the author of* Reconstructing America: The Symbol of America in Modern Thought *(Yale University Press).

THE U.S. AIR WAR IN ASIA

by James L. Tyson

CHINA HAS BEEN MUCH IN THE NEWS lately, what with its most-favored-nation status and its takeover of Hong Kong. We ask, Does China represent a threat to American interests and to peace in general? Or, with economic liberalization, is it becoming less of a threat? It is true that Beijing is permitting private enterprise and encouraging foreign investment. But political tyranny on the mainland continues. There is no freedom of speech, or of the press, or of religion. Citizens who dare criticize the regime or practice their faith are subject to arrest. Some 10 million languish in prison camps.

The same may be said of China's neighbors, Vietnam and Laos. Both of these countries promote free enterprise and succeed in attracting American entrepreneurs, but they remain Communist dictatorships all the same, denying the vote and maintaining tight control of religion and the press. North Korea, of course, is an out-and-out Stalinist state, in which the people are thoroughly subjugated, and starving.

What can the United States do about oppression in Asia? A dictatorial government that encourages a free market can be just as dangerous as a classically totalitarian one, simply because it is more efficient. Americans ought to do more than congratulate themselves for prodigious deal-striking.

A major weapon, already launched, is Radio Free Asia. But it suffers from inadequate financial support. RFA started up in September 1996, as a broadcast service to the Communist countries of Asia. It is now transmitting to China (in Mandarin) and Tibet (in Tibetan), as well as to Vietnam, North Korea, and Burma. Transmissions to Cambodia and Laos are set to begin later this year.

All of these countries are reached by the Voice of America as well. But RFA's role is different: The Voice provides international and U.S. news, along with editorial comments that reflect American policy; RFA provides news mainly having to do with the particular target country. In other words, RFA delivers the type of news that citizens in those countries would get if they enjoyed a free press (this is also known as a "surrogate home service"). The mission of Radio Free Asia is not to urge revolt, but rather to promote democracy by giving listeners accurate news—otherwise unobtainable—and commentaries on democratic values. Two years ago at a conference, the difference between the Voice and RFA was summed up by the head of VOA China: "My mission," he said, "is not to *change* China; my mission is to *inform* China." Neither does RFA have the explicit mission to "change" China or any other target country. But it has always been the implicit mission of "surrogate home services," such as Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, to promote democracy simply by virtue of their being what they are and doing what they do.

There is strong evidence that Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty played a major part in the collapse of communism and the growth of democracy in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. The first significant crack in the Communist wall came with Lech Walesa's Solidarity movement in Poland. When Walesa started his strike at the Gdansk shipyards, he was attempting to promote sympathy strikes in other parts of the

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country. He now says that RFE's reporting of the strikes—news of which the state media were censoring—was critical to the success of his effort and the eventual unraveling of communism throughout the region. About the importance of RFE to his cause, he once said, "The degree cannot even be described. Would there be Earth without the sun?" Mikhail Gorbachev testifies that, during the attempted coup by hardliners against him in Moscow, his only reliable source of news was Radio Liberty.

When a Presidential Commission on Broadcasting to Asia recommended the creation of Radio Free Asia in 1992, it suggested a start-up budget of $45 million, to be followed by an annual budget of $35 million. But when the service was finally implemented—after four years of congressional foot-dragging—RFA was given only $9.3 million for its initial year. Congress is still debating the 1998 RFA budget. The present House bill authorizes $27 million, while the Senate bill authorizes $20 million. Although these are welcome increases over the $9.3 million, they are still too low, especially given the vast territory to be served and the number of languages to be used. RFA is now broadcasting in Mandarin for four hours a day, and two hours a day in Tibetan, Korean, Vietnamese, and Burmese. The Laotian and Cambodian services that will begin later this year will also transmit for two hours.

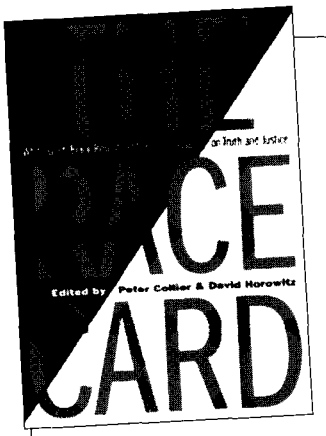
The results have been intriguing. RFA China has managed to broadcast phone interviews with people on the mainland who are brave enough to risk retaliation. A particularly heart-rending interview was conducted with the mother of Wang Dan, a leader in the Tiananmen Square demonstration, shortly after he was imprisoned. Other regular features include "Book Corner," "Cross-straits Crossfire" (which deals with Taiwan), and "Party Member Voices" (talks with disillusioned former Communists).

The broadcasts have had a strong and measurable impact. The government has attempted to jam them (with only partial success, because of multiple transmission sites). The official *People's Daily* has denounced RFA as "disgusting Cold War static funded by the CIA." Until the July 1 handover, Chinese citizens sent a large volume of mail to a Hong Kong post-office box, expressing appreciation. Mail was received from 17 provinces, not only the major cities.

Tibetans say that, in their country, RFA broadcasts have caused grocery stores to begin selling radio sets. The North Korean regime has been publishing articles attacking the service. Vietnam, too, has begun jamming RFA, but, as in China, without total success. RFA Vietnam hopes that the building of more powerful transmission facilities will be able to overcome any further jamming.

The present cost of RFA is trivial, and the possible benefits great. The United States is spending more than $250 *billion* per year on defense, at least a third of which can be attributed to the potential threat of Asia's Communist regimes. As one observer said, the RFA allowance is nothing more than a "rounding error" in the total defense and information budget. A larger budget would enable RFA to function more broadly, more powerfully. This "surrogate home service" by itself will not cause a thousand democratic flowers to bloom. But, given the record of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, it is clear that Radio Free Asia can do much. RFA has the opportunity to provide more than 1.4 billion people—a third of the world's population—with a daily dose of truth. Rarely are taxpayer dollars better spent. We should spend more, and spend them gladly.

James L. Tyson, the author of **U.S. International Broadcasting and National Security,** *served on the 1992 Presidential Commission on Broadcasting to Asia.*



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THEY'RE OFF!

The Republican Presidential Race in 2000 Begins. No, We're Not Kidding.

By David Tell

Indianapolis

You can't sit down here in the convention center ballroom without first picking up the cardboard placard on your chair, either a "Speaker Newt!" in blue, or an "I ♥ Newt" in red. Each of 1,300-odd delegates to the 1997 "Midwest Republican Leadership Conference" has been given a "Newt's Friend" lapel sticker. Minutes before the luncheon kickoff on Friday, August 22, a youngster from the Nebraska Teen-Age Republicans moves from table to table. He's distributing a full-color flyer that explains how Gingrich is "helping build a better America" by being "an animal lover" and whatnot. In short, this event is being worked—diligently—by the speaker's campaign committee, the "Friends of Newt Gingrich." You can spot these salaried Friends in the crowd. They're the ones with plastic earpieces and wrist microphones wired up their shirtsleeves.

The Gingrich troops are trying this hard because their man is giving his reputation a cross-country carwash during the late-summer congressional recess. He's been everywhere, even back on the *Tonight Show*. And he'll be everywhere some more before it's over, hoping to get his personal disapproval number down below 60.

There's another reason the Friends of Newt have rolled into Indianapolis in such precise formation. There are almost three times as many Republican activists here as attended the last such regional meeting, in 1995. Among them are an unusually large contingent of Republican national, state, county, and district officials. They are here in such force, absurd as it sounds, to witness what has become the first big event of the next Republican presidential campaign.

Months ago, Indiana state GOP chairman Mike McDaniel began inviting the presumptive candidates to come give a talk about the party's future agenda. Dan Quayle agreed immediately—a "new indoor record," McDaniel's top aide says. Lamar Alexander and Jack Kemp were also quick to say yes. And as more acceptances rolled in, holdouts were gently encouraged to worry that their absence might be taken to *mean* something. "That's how I played it," McDaniel told me by telephone earlier in the week. He had just locked up his final featured speaker. Steve Forbes, who initially declined, had called to say he would interrupt a family vacation and make the trip.

A surprising number of Republicans in Washington already expect Newt Gingrich will run for president, too. He might, this scenario goes, declare for the office after next year's mid-term elections—and resign from the House, thus sparing himself an almost certain speakership challenge. He would probably then get knocked out of the 2000 presidential primaries early—and retire from politics, thus sparing his party the burden of running a third successive federal campaign under a barrage of Democratic "anti-Gingrich" ads.

At the start of this Indianapolis conference, it really doesn't matter whether Newt is go or no-go on the presidency. It matters only that he still dominates the Republican party's mind and body. This domination made sense in 1994 and 1995, when Gingrich designed the campaign and platform for partisan revolution in Congress. It was already unnatural in 1996, however, when the party's overarching agenda should have been determined not by its top legislator, but by its presidential candidate. This year the party has nearly suffocated under Gingrich. But it cannot throw off his grip. No one yet dares talk about any aspect of the Republican future until Newt lays down his marker. If these other fellows are going to speak in Indianapolis, the speaker must speak first.

And speak he does. Gingrich brags about the budget deal he's engineered. Though every specific achievement he mentions has been signed into law by Bill Clinton, they all somehow lead, the speaker insists, to "a very clear choice between two teams" in the House and Senate races of 1998. Next, Gingrich proposes to bring back welfare reform as a "major national issue" this fall.

Gingrich is just getting started. He asks the crowd to "imagine a triangle" of contemporary political

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issues. The triangle has, by my count, four sides and six goals and "no more than five really big items"—these last constituting a "Second Contract" for the year 2000. Gingrich will design this contract himself, presumably, and the GOP's "presidential nominee, Senate candidates, and House candidates" will be pressed to embrace it.

He likes the LoJack anti-car-theft device. He wants a "21st-century veterans health care initiative" with satellite hookups to all the world's medical experts. He says people in Washington still use manual typewriters and carbon paper. He says a whole lot of stuff.

When he's done, the speaker hustles into an adjacent hallway, where his essential character is instantly on display. He is not "talking to supporters" in this hallway, as a *New York Times* photo caption subsequently indicates. He is talking to *reporters*, which is quite a different thing. Jeanne Cummings of the *Atlanta Constitution* asks Gingrich a perfectly sensible question about a line in his speech unmistakably endorsing a "flat tax with virtual elimination of the IRS." He denies he said that. And while he's denying, he gets that classic pinched smile on his face, as if to say he cannot believe how much blind stupidity he must put up with. *La vérité c'est moi.*

His conference audience hasn't seen or heard this unpleasant exchange. They have only seen and heard his speech. And they have given it a standing ovation. Because, for all his warts, Newt Gingrich remains a very effective wordslinger—when he's talking to people who don't get to talk back. And also because, in the Republican party, Newt Gingrich still seems to be The Man.

But he will not seem so much The Man by weekend's close.

Later in the day, the conferees listen to a polling report by Bill McInturff and Neil Newhouse of Public Opinion Strategies. POS has just conducted a national survey of 800 registered voters. Some of the questions it's asked concern the presidential race in 2000. Gingrich, it turns out, is the first-choice nominee for only 5 percent of likely Republican voters—and the results are bad for a number of other famous people who'll trail through town this weekend. So rather than embarrass anybody, the pollsters do not reveal their horse-race data in Indianapolis. They concentrate on national mood and issues, instead.

The mood of the country is good. Clinton's approval rating is the highest of his presidency. Approval of Congress is the highest it's been since 1974. All of which, McInturff and Newhouse say, suggests a status-quo election in 1998, with low turnout and a bunch of reelected incumbents. But, they warn: Economics has receded in political importance; social and cultural concerns are ascendant. And on a number of these non-economic issues, as they are typically debated, voters now lean toward the Democrats. If Republicans are to take full advantage of an incumbent-friendly atmosphere, the pollsters advise, they had better recast some of their rhetoric.

As it happens, most speakers on this weekend's schedule will ignore this advice and stick to a familiar script. Except in one fairly consistent—and important—respect. The exceptionalism begins almost immediately, with former-Vice President Quayle.

The pre-primary struggle for any Republican presidential nomination usually includes a single Mainstream Conservative, and Quayle clearly believes he deserves that prized tag. His speech is a fluid review of the conservative landscape: school choice, legal reform, science-based environmentalism, term limits, and—of course—family values. Quayle even conducts a mini-seminar on foreign policy and national security, which are subjects Indianapolis's other would-be presidents scoot right over. But before he gets to any of this, early in his talk, he announces that he "must share with you a concern I have." And then he launches an attack on Newt's budget deal.

He says the deal is bad on taxes and spending and welfare. He complains that Republicans got a "grand photo opportunity at the White House," but "the taxpayer once again got the shaft." He says the child tax credit has degenerated into "social engineering at its worst."

At first, Quayle's thrust at Gingrich makes his audience—party regulars, not anti-Beltway insurgents—uncomfortable, unsure how to react. Then a remarkable thing happens. They start to *enjoy* it. By the time Quayle demands "a contract with America, not a contract with Bill Clinton," the room is cheering.

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"I never mentioned Newt by name," Quayle will later remind me. He didn't have to.

After he leaves the stage, the ex-veep is mobbed by well-wishers. It takes him 15 minutes to move all of 10 feet, and he doesn't get out of the hall for at least half an hour. But before he escapes, reality intrudes. A reporter from the television tabloid *American Journal* asks Quayle a snotty question about William Figueroa, the infamous "potatoe" kid from 1992. Figueroa is now 17 years old, a high-school dropout, the unmarried father of a 14-month-old girl. Did Quayle have Mr. Potatoe in mind when he bemoaned the decline of American morals?

AS SOON AS KEYES IS DONE SPEAKING A DELEGATE MAKES A BEELINE FOR RICK BERKE OF THE *NEW YORK TIMES*. IT'S AS IF SHE HAD SPECIAL *TIMES* RADAR.

Quayle stuffs this guy. Onlookers clap. Then a local NBC affiliate does a live stand-up. Looking directly into the vice president's eyes, the NBC reporter says he is surprised Quayle used a lot of facts and figures in his speech—and spoke without notes. "Is this a new Dan Quayle?" In other words: When did you stop being a moron? Amazingly, this appears not to bother Quayle. He seems totally inured to such insults, and oddly confident that he can overcome his own cartoonish image.

He is in the race, all but announced. He finishes a respectable third in the POS poll, the first or second choice for 24 percent of GOP primary voters. He has formed a PAC. For the time being, that PAC is managing to raise and spend money at a healthy clip. Quayle seems to think that he knows what he's doing. And whatever that is, he's pretty good at it. A couple hours after his speech, Quayle hosts a "Hoosier Hospitality Barbecue" at the Indianapolis Speedway infield. Delegates line up for more than an hour to have their picture taken with him—646 of them in all. It's a largely home-state group, of course. But not entirely. I fall into conversation with Don Grothe, a party official from Wisconsin. What does he make of the conference's first day? I wonder. Grothe says: "The budget deal's not all it's cracked up to be, is it?"

Day two begins with a Lamar Alexander breakfast. Alexander has been running for president almost continuously since 1993. Nineteen months ago, with help from the finest campaign staff in the party, he came within five days of winning the New Hampshire primary—only to be denied by a Bob Dole television blitz. Already, for next time, he is recruiting field operatives. He has a PAC—and ostensible commitments from many of the GOP's leading fund-raisers. On paper, Alexander is formidable.

He is also the most supple thinker in the emerging pack. The speech he delivers is a sophisticated, general analysis of the state of the union, emphasizing two questions he knows cold: education and race relations. It is well received; he gets plenty of applause.

And yet. Two hours after Alexander is finished, I quiz a few random delegates in the convention center lobby. They're fuzzy on what he said. It's a puzzling thing, Lamar's lack of bite (he polls a nearly invisible ninth place in the POS sample). He is very smart. But Alexander has always seemed a man who can't convince himself smarts really count for much in electoral politics. He seems convinced, instead, that ground-game mechanics are everything.

The most widely derided gimmicks of Alexander '96 are gone—the plaid shirt, the cornball slogans, the line about "cut their pay and send them home." But the memory of those gimmicks is ubiquitous in the political world, all of whose denizens remain on hair-trigger alert for their return. When, early in his speech, Alexander makes reference to "those of us in the private sector," I steal a glance at my colleagues on the press platform. Most of them are rolling their eyes.

Ordinary Republicans harbor similar suspicions. When you ask them what they think of Lamar, two words come back with alarming frequency: "moderate" and—worse—"phony." He has the conservative issues down pat. But he largely ignores their details, the day-to-day disputes that give those issues life. Alexander throws only a few random punches at President Clinton in Indianapolis. He doesn't mention the budget deal. This disengagement makes what should be his greatest strength—undeniable command of substance—seem like simply one more clever act.

Disengagement isn't Alan Keyes's problem. You need know only a few things about Keyes's appearance in Indianapolis. First, nobody takes him seriously as a presidential candidate. Second, he is "divisive," which is to say he is someone pro-choice Republicans really love to hate. As soon as Keyes is done speaking here, a conference delegate from North Dakota named Chris Dueker starts from way across the ballroom and makes a beeline for Rick Berke of the *New York Times*, sitting directly beside me. It's as if she had special *Times* radar. And she gives Rick an earful about how Keyes alone is "enough to make me vote Democratic." Third, the man's divisiveness is not actually why

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nobody takes him seriously as a presidential candidate. Nobody takes him seriously as a presidential candidate because he is temperamentally unpresidential. He has an electric intensity. The electricity is always on, never off—even, I suspect, when he is asleep. This is scary; it has the vague feel of megalomania about it.

Fourth, it's a fair bet that Alan Keyes is the world's greatest living orator. He has a spellbinding, almost superhuman eloquence: If you can make your way past his weakness for the deliberately outrageous turn of phrase, you find serious ideas, expressed apparently off the cuff, in always precise and frequently gorgeous prose. Fifth, virtually the entire Keyes address—it runs 50 minutes—is a spectacular broadside against Newt Gingrich and the Republican Congress he commands. Not just the budget deal. The whole kit and caboodle. And, sixth, more than 1,000 run-of-the-mill Republican shmoes absolutely adore him for this ballsiness. They stand, they shout, they get goosebumps. By the time Keyes finishes, Ronald Reagan's Eleventh Commandment—"thou shalt not speak ill of a fellow Republican"—is totally out the window.

Keyes is hot; Fred Thompson is cool. It's not immediately clear why the senator from Tennessee is here, participating in a semi-official audition for wannabe presidential nominees. True, there's lots of low-level GOP static about him just now. He "would be good" in 2000, you hear. If he got in the race, he would "hurt Lamar" by tapping the same donor barrel. He is "an outsider." He "has no gender gap."

But this is guesswork, not a rationale for a candidacy. Moreover, none of this talk can reliably be traced back to Thompson himself. He flatly denies ever having thought about running for president. He has no PAC. He has no campaign staff-in-waiting. He polls, according to POS, down there in the weeds, somewhere between Gingrich and Keyes.

Even more impressive, in a backwards sort of way, Fred Thompson doesn't bother to pretend that he has a comprehensive plan for America. At least no hint of such a plan appears in his noontime speech. The meatiest section of the talk is a strategic argument about how campaign-finance reform is not "anti-Republican." He urges the GOP to "take the lead here." The delegates applaud only when Thompson adds a word about what Democrats must do: "come out against workers' union dues being coerced to go [to] candidates that they don't even support."

But the crowd applauds more lustily for the rest of the senator's remarks. Especially when, consistent with the plain spirit of this conference, Thompson criticizes the budget deal, which he voted against. Fred Thompson may not be running for president like the others. But he is at once comfortably "one of us" and *not* mechanically "on message" for the congressional GOP. So he is perfectly at home in Indianapolis today.

He is also a Big Star, something you can't fully appreciate until you see his effect on a live audience. People are mesmerized by him. At the end of the lunch he spends a quarter of an hour standing to the side of the podium, answering impromptu questions from anyone who approaches. Too many delegates and camera crews do approach; I can't get close enough to hear him. But I can see eight-month-old Chad Hiltuman of Indianapolis get shoved into Thompson's arms at one point, the only actual baby-kissing moment of the entire weekend.

If we set Alan Keyes aside for a moment and judge only the mortals, Steve Forbes gives the best speech of the Midwest Republican Leadership Conference. No, really. He is still for the flat tax. There are echoes of last year when he first takes the stage: the nervous kid with the propellered beanie and memorized book report. But they are only echoes; he is a vastly improved performer. And he has remade the rest of himself, as well. The new Forbes is impressive.

Gone is the futuristic wonderment of his original economic message. Forbes has found something to be angry about in the present—which always helps in politics. The budget deal, he announces, is an "abomination." There are no doubters in the hall once he's finished explaining why. He is funny at the start: "I'm surprised they didn't come up with a tax credit for kids who clean their rooms once a week." He is interesting in the middle; his text is not loosely stitched together sound-bites, but actual information. And he is convincingly righteous in conclusion. The audience listens intently. They're with him.

FORBES IS A VASTLY IMPROVED PERFORMER, AND HE HAS FOUND SOMETHING TO BE ANGRY ABOUT—WHICH ALWAYS HELPS IN POLITICS.

Forbes gets a spontaneous, standing ovation a few minutes later when he ends a long, moving passage on working families with a demand for sweeping tax relief. You would expect him to be this engaged with the "growth agenda." You would not expect him to be much engaged with the rest of American domestic politics. But he is. He talks about school choice and illegal

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drugs and tort reform and term limits. He talks about abortion and euthanasia: "Life begins at conception and ends at natural death." These are not just cheap mentions. Forbes sounds like a man who's been doing a lot of reading. And doing it pretty well.

Forbes does not have a PAC. He does have something that probably suits his style and purpose better, though—an issue-advocacy organization called "Americans for Hope, Growth and Opportunity." Over the past six months or so, the group has spent several hundred thousand dollars on radio and television ads boosting favored legislation and initiatives in a bunch of different states. And Forbes is picking up further chits, though few people know about it, through service as finance chairman of the national Republican party's senatorial campaign committee.

He is now the first- or second-choice presidential nominee for 15 percent of Republican primary voters, according to McInturff and Newhouse. No man without experience in elected office has been nominated for president by a major American political party since Dwight Eisenhower in 1952, and he won World War II. Forbes isn't going to make it, most likely. But before his campaign dies, the old book on him—"Who the hell does this rich guy think he is?"—will have to be thoroughly rewritten.

There are probably 1,500 people in the Indianapolis convention center on Saturday evening. Gov. George W. Bush of Texas is the biggest draw of the entire conference, and the most talked-about presidential possibility in the GOP. He is said to be an excellent governor; his 70 percent approval rating in Texas says so, too. He is said to be flirting with Ralph Reed over a top political consulting job, and Ralph Reed is said to be flirting back. Bush is said to be nailing down foot soldiers farther down the organizational chart, as well, and his father is said to be writing letters in support. Gov. Bush is even supposed to have settled on a primary strategy for 2000. He will largely ignore Iowa and New Hampshire. On Super Tuesday the following month, Gov. David Beasley will deliver South Carolina, Bush's brother Jeb will deliver Florida, and Texas is already in the bag.

George W. Bush is the leading first choice in the McInturff and Newhouse survey. He is the leading second choice in the McInturff and Newhouse survey. Victory.

But he has to stay home and run for reelection next year first. This is only his fifth out-of-Texas political trip in 1997, and Mike McDaniel really had to press to get him here at all. Bush will be in and out of Indianapolis in less than five hours. He will not talk to reporters. And his staff will only say that his planned remarks are a standard stump speech.

True enough. There's extensive material about the governor's accomplishments in Austin. It's surrounded by pedestrian, anodyne flourishes about what the Republican party stands for. The speech is a dud.

At a restaurant an hour later, a bunch of reporters decide that Bush, as a candidate, is for real, but that the current Bush boomlet is hollow, a function of name identification and the wish for a logical successor to Bob Dole. Later for you, Junior.

And later, too, with fewer qualifications, for Jack Kemp. On Sunday afternoon, Kemp closes the conference bill in Indianapolis. Kemp has lots of soft, residual popularity in the GOP; he finishes second in the POS survey. He has a PAC. He's traveling around. He has clever friends who know how to manage a national campaign, and his body language indicates he wants to run.

But last time out, seconding Bob Dole, Kemp was an appalling candidate: lazy, undisciplined, self-involved. Introducing Kemp to the delegates, Ohio GOP chairman Bob Bennett mentions the 1996 vice presidential nomination. There is an awkward silence. Then a couple people clap. But only a couple. And then you can hear murmurs throughout the ballroom.

Kemp knows he has a problem. About last year he will acknowledge "there are some things I would do differently." But he doesn't do any of them today. I have heard him give this speech a dozen times before. You probably have, too. He has changed the words around a bit. He has updated his anecdotes. He says he would have voted for the budget deal if he were still in Congress. Kemp speaks for just under 40 minutes, and he is warmly received. But he is deeply boring.

On the way out of the hall, I notice that everybody's stopped wearing his "Newt's Friend" lapel sticker. I run into someone whose name you would recognize were I at liberty to print it here. He tells me, a propos of nothing, that he has "figured out what Newt's problem is." What's that? I ask. "He's an a—hole," comes the reply.

Yes, it is ridiculous (though quite a lot of fun) to start handicapping the Republican primary campaign of 2000 now, two and a half years out. The basket of potential candidates is enormous. Along with the Indianapolis contingent, there are a couple of people who've already gone out of their way to say they're thinking about the race—senators John Ashcroft of Missouri and Bob Smith of New Hampshire. Gov.

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Frank Keating of Oklahoma has told Paul Gigot of the *Wall Street Journal* that he *might* think about it. And there's a longer list of mentionables, some of them preposterous, some of them not: Trent Lott, John McCain, Pete Wilson, John Kasich, Liddy Dole, Terry Branstad, George Pataki, Christie Whitman, Bill Bennett, fill in the blank. The next Republican presidential campaign is wide open, in other words, as wide open as any in 50 years. There is no "safe" choice for the GOP.

Which is one reason the race seems to be starting so early. But it is not the only reason. And the mere fact that its outcome cannot be predicted does not make the entire process absurd, as the wiseguys have it. It is not absurd at all, it turns out, judging from the evidence of Indianapolis. Republicans are beginning finally to recognize that Gingrich is not the world. They are hungry for an agenda that is not generated by Newt, or approved by Newt, or influenced by Newt, or signed by Clinton in a deal with Newt. When they get a taste of such an agenda, even notionally, they like it.

Legislative parties legislate. Presidents—and presidential candidates—lead. Newt Gingrich is in eclipse. The race for 2000 has begun. ♦

The Good News Is the Good News Is Right

By Michael Barone

America is changing more rapidly and more for the better than almost anyone in Washington yet realizes. The evidence is there, in plain sight, in publicly reported statistics whose import almost no one seems to realize. What the numbers tell us is this: The crime rate and the welfare rolls are starting to fall as steeply as they rose in the awful years from 1965 to 1975. If these trends continue—we do not know that they will, but there is good reason to think they might—we will see in not too many years the near-disappearance of the related pathologies of high crime and welfare dependency, which until very recently seemed deep-rooted and ineradicable.

Consider the crime numbers. The FBI's crime index—the number of serious offenses per 100,000 inhabitants—peaked in 1991 at 5,898. Preliminary data indicate that the rate for 1996 will be around 5,120—a 13 percent drop in six years. To put that in perspective, look at what has happened to crime rates over the last 30 years. Between 1965 and 1975, the crime index more than tripled—an increase of 200 percent. Then between 1975 and 1980, crime rose another 12 percent. The 1991-96 crime decrease thus is almost precisely equal to the 1975-80 crime increase.

Now the question is whether the drop will continue or whether it will be reversed (a similar drop in the crime rate in the early Reagan years was reversed by the crack epidemic of the late 1980s). No one can be sure of the answer, of course. But there is some reason to be optimistic. When statistics came out for 1994 and 1995, it was often noted that one-third of the national decrease in crimes occurred in New York City. But the successful techniques of Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's police commissioners are no secret and are being replicated elsewhere. Other cities are using computers to deploy large numbers of cops to drug-market and high-crime spots and are enforcing the rules against small offenses and disorderliness. Evidence from the preliminary 1996 figures confirms these things are happening. New York City is no longer alone. Crime is down 12 percent in Los Angeles, 11 percent in Miami, 10 percent in Baltimore, 15 percent in Boston, 11 percent in Birmingham, and 14 percent in Pittsburgh.

To be sure, we should take seriously the warnings of John DiIulio that a generation of superpredators is about to hit the streets. But we should also remember that the 1990s decrease in crime results not from demographic factors, which no one can change, but from public policies and police procedures, which anyone can copy.

In welfare we see a similar pattern. From January 1994 to May 1997, welfare rolls declined from 5.05 million households to 3.87 million households—a 23

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percent drop. In some quarters this has been attributed to the robust economy. But previous growth periods have not been accompanied by drops in welfare rolls. Welfare rolls, like crime rates, more than tripled from 1965 to 1975, rising from 1 million households to 3.5 million. From 1975 until 1990, welfare plateaued, with caseloads rising only slightly during recessions and dropping only slightly during growth spurts. Then welfare increased sharply from 1990 to 1994.

Now the welfare rolls are below the 1990 figures and declining faster than ever before in history. As with crime, there is some reason to believe that the drop in pathology will continue. For one thing, in May 1997 the 1996 welfare-reform law was just going into effect; states were only beginning their reforms free of the supervision of Donna Shalala's Health and Human Services Department. And the fact that progress was highly uneven among the states suggests that more progress is possible. Wisconsin is the leader here: Gov. Tommy Thompson has been shrewdly and aggressively reforming welfare for 10 years, and in the spring of 1997 Wisconsin's welfare rolls were down 52 percent from 1994. Welfare rolls also declined 48 percent in Oregon, 44 percent in Tennessee, 41 percent in Oklahoma, 47 percent in Indiana, and 37 percent in Massachusetts.

My guess is that not so long from now, and without much regard for who wins the next few elections, crime rates and welfare rolls are going to look a lot more like 1965 than 1975. Why? Because we as a country, in large part through governmental action but initially in our own individual behavior and values, are de-sanctioning behaviors to which we as a country, in large part through governmental action but initially in our own individual behavior and values, gave sanction from 1965 to 1975.

Crime was sanctioned by an America that, in the wake of the civil-rights revolution, was ready to forgive disadvantaged criminals. You had a politician as responsible as Hubert Humphrey saying that if he were a ghetto youth, he would riot too. And even as crime rates rose, the number of people in prison fell from 1961 to 1968; it was not much above the 1961 level in 1975. Consider what this statistic means. Not just a few liberal elite leaders in Washington, but decision-makers around the country—prosecutors, judges, jurors, state legislators—were imprisoning fewer criminals. In retrospect, these decisions operated as a sanction *for* crime, a way for society to say that people, especially the poor and those discriminated against, are going to commit crimes and there is not much to be done about it.

By the early 1970s that attitude had changed, among most ordinary people if not in the liberal elite. Since decision-making in criminal justice has remained mostly decentralized, the elite was not able to hold prison populations down, and today there are four times as many prisoners as there were in 1975. That helped stop the rise in crime rates. They declined when leading political figures—Ronald Reagan in the early 1980s, big-city mayors like Giuliani in the mid-1990s—began articulately to withdraw sanction from crime. There seems to be a pattern here: When the elites and the people both sanctioned crime, crime rates shot up; when the elites but not the people sanctioned crime, crime rates plateaued; when the elites and the people together de-sanctioned crime, crime rates fell.

Similarly with welfare. In the middle 1960s, even as the economy was growing robustly, the country started sanctioning welfare dependency. New York mayor John Lindsay's welfare commissioner Mitchell Ginsberg announced that the city would not check the eligibility of any applicant for welfare: Anybody could get on the rolls. Society was actively sanctioning welfare; it was saying, This is what we expect people to do. Welfare rolls tripled in the subsequent 10 years. By the late 1970s, voters were fed up and started voting against government spending and taxes. But the elites continued to sanction welfare dependency through the 1990s. As was true with crime, when the elite and the people sanctioned welfare dependency, the welfare rolls exploded. When the elites but not the people sanctioned it, the rolls plateaued. When the elite withdrew their sanction, the welfare rolls dropped.

This notion of sanction gives a plausible explanation for trends that economic and demographic factors utterly fail to explain. There was no economic or demographic reason why crime rates and welfare rolls should have tripled from 1965 to 1975; these were mostly years of economic growth, and while the demographic groups most prone to commit crime and to go on welfare did increase, they did not triple in size. Nor can these trends be explained as a response to virulent racial discrimination; it was a time when civil-rights acts were passed, public accommodations, workplaces, and schools were conspicuously desegregated, and racial quotas and preferences were instituted. During the years of plateau from 1975 to the early 1990s, neither crime nor the size of welfare rolls was particularly responsive to the business cycle. And if the sharp drop in crime rates and welfare rolls of the 1990s occurred in years of economic growth, crime and welfare rates changed only marginally in previous growth years. Crime and welfare rates did not change because incomes changed;

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they changed because minds changed.

And not necessarily the minds of our most visible leaders. Richard Nixon, preaching law and order, was president during most of the years when crime rates and welfare rolls tripled; Bill Clinton, always ready to feel anyone's pain, has been president during most of the happy years of the 1990s when crime rates and welfare rolls have fallen. These two presidents were stragglers, not leaders, in the movement of ideas.

Playing more of a leading role were strategically placed politicians who finally moved the fulcrum point of elite opinion where the fulcrum point of popular opinion had long been. On crime, this meant Rudolph Giuliani and other big-city mayors, who replaced apologists for criminal behavior like Detroit's Coleman Young and critics of police brutality who seemed indifferent to victims of crime, like New York's David Dinkins. On welfare, the initial impetus was given by governors, most but not all of them Republicans. But governors' reforms were obstructed by the Department of Health and Human Services—Bush's and Reagan's as well as Clinton's. Then came the election of the Republican Congress in 1994. I think it is significant that the welfare rolls started falling, just as interest rates did, in November 1994; welfare mothers may be just as sensitive to political trends as bond-traders. The passage of the 1996 welfare-reform act, followed by the reelection of a Republican Congress, sent an unmistakable signal through the country that the entitlement to welfare was gone and would never return.

So we may—I repeat, may—be on the verge of decreases in crime and welfare as sharp as the increases in 1965-75. The result will not be nirvana: We are making more progress in curbing lower-class vices than in strengthening middle-class virtues. But the possibility of such progress, and the progress that has already occurred, should hearten those who are busy lamenting the less-than-perfect performance of this Republican Congress or that Republican officeholder. The fact is that in the past few years some Republican politicians (and a few Democrats) have done things that have not just changed the letter of some laws but have improved the quality and character of the entire society in important ways. If Republicans had not won control of Congress in 1994 and had not pushed welfare reform in 1996, if Giuliani had not been elected mayor in 1993 and had not brought William Bratton's reforms to the Police Department, welfare dependency and crime rates would not have fallen as much as they have—perhaps would not have changed much at all. These Republican victories made a difference in how Americans live. It is not often given to a political party to have such success. It should be appreciated. ♦

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The Evisceration of Export Controls

By Matthew Rees

Mitch Wallerstein doesn't seem like someone you'd want in a key job affecting national security. In the 1980s, when the Reagan administration was tightening controls on American exports to Communist countries, he noisily called for export liberalization. Through the Bush years, he used his perch at the National Academy of Sciences to press for wholesale repeal of export controls. Nevertheless, when Bill Clinton became president, Wallerstein, who holds a doctorate from MIT, landed a heavyweight position—deputy assistant secretary of defense for counterproliferation—in which he could influence strategic-export policy.

And influence policy he has. Over the past five and a half years, Wallerstein and his allies in the administration have forsaken national-security concerns while gutting export restrictions on supercomputers, machine tools with military applications, and missile and telecommunications technology. The effect: A small number of high-technology firms have boosted their overseas sales—and the U.S. government has cooperated in placing extremely sensitive technology

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useful for waging war in the hands of governments that can't be trusted. To cite just one example, in recent years U.S. companies have sold to China and Russia high-performance supercomputers at least 10 times more powerful than any these countries have had in their possession before. Supercomputers can serve many functions, but it is widely believed that these are being used in the design and production of nuclear arms.

THE PACE OF EXPORT LIBERALIZATION AND THE MANNER IN WHICH IT HAS BEEN CONDUCTED HAVE LEFT SOME CAREER OFFICIALS DISGUSTED.

It wasn't supposed to be this way. In 1992, presidential candidate Bill Clinton zinged George Bush repeatedly for coddling the Chinese and selling arms to Saddam Hussein. His running mate also had a purist rhetorical record on proliferation. In an October 1991 Senate speech, Al Gore declared, "We do not have to recognize the sovereign right of all governments to acquire weapons of mass destruction if they happen to have the talent and money to waste on that process." He ended the same speech with a call to expose "the corporations that are selling this technology of mass death . . . those whose greed could take humanity to the gates of hell and beyond."

But the laxity that Clinton and Gore excoriated as candidates pales beside the anything-goes regime they have implemented in office. Gary Milhollin, head of the Wisconsin Project and one of Washington's leading arms-control authorities, estimates that since the end of the Cold War there's been a tenfold drop in the number and value of high-technology items whose export the United States controls. Last year, just 0.6 percent of all U.S. exports were subject to export controls, and the Clinton administration approved a whopping 95 percent of the applications it received for export licenses. William Reinsch, top export official at the Commerce Department, neatly conveyed the administration's mindset when he boasted in congressional testimony recently that "yesterday's adversaries are today's customers."

Why this about-face? The end of the Cold War, coupled with technological advances, made some loosening inevitable in the 1990s. But the liberalization that has taken place goes further. It is part of Bill Clinton's relentless effort, first as a candidate, then as president, to cultivate a mutually supportive relationship with U.S. businesses. Throughout the Reagan and Bush years, American companies agitated for decontrol of exports. But it was Clinton who delivered it for them—just as he abandoned the hard line of his campaign and embraced unimpeded trade with China. So ardent has been the administration's courting of business that its top appointees seem to give little heed to the very real implications for national security.

Under the banner of "commercial diplomacy," Ron Brown's gung-ho Commerce Department led the way. But in a significant departure from past administrations, the Defense Department—traditionally vigilant in the area of strategic exports—has become an enthusiastic partner in the peddling of American goods. That is the work of Wallerstein and a few other senior Pentagon appointees.

The pace of export liberalization and the manner in which it has been conducted have left some career Pentagon officials disgusted. Peter Leitner, for example, has worked at the Defense Technology Security Administration—the agency that oversees export controls for the Department of Defense—for 11 years, and during the past five years he's worked alongside Wallerstein. In June he took the extraordinary step of criticizing his employer—the Clinton administration—in testimony before the congressional Joint Economic Committee: "The greatest single point of failure in maintaining a credible export-control system," Leitner said,

> was the neutering of the Defense Department's traditional role as the conservative anchor of the process. This action was carried out very quickly by freezing DOD's key staff out of the chain of command and isolating them from the decision-making process within DOD. DOD abandoned its traditional role and instructed DOD employees to side with the Commerce Department and isolate the State Department and ACDA [the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency] on many issues. This bizarre role change finds the State Department at times in the farcical position of being the lone agency making the national security case and opposing liberalization positions from DOD.

Mitch Wallerstein embodies the Pentagon's pro-export mentality—not least in that, having opened the floodgates, he refuses to acknowledge that American products may have ended up in the wrong hands. He told a Senate hearing in June, "We have no immediate evidence to suggest that the exports to China . . . have been inimical to U.S. national-security interests." This begs the question of what are, in Wallerstein's view, the United States's national-security interests. Even the Commerce Department has acknowledged that sensitive American exports such as supercomputers and

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aviation technology have gone to the Chinese military, and the CIA concluded in a recently declassified study that during the second half of 1996, China was "the most significant supplier of weapons-of-mass-destruction-related goods and technology to foreign countries."

Wallerstein has hardly been alone in seeking to dismantle America's export-control regulations. The Clinton administration's former defense secretary, William Perry, had a history of opposing export controls dating back to his days in the Carter administration. In his 1993 confirmation hearings, he said controlling dual-use technology—technology with both civilian and military applications—was a "hopeless task" that "only interferes with a company's ability to succeed internationally." Other key members of the Pentagon's pro-liberalization cabal have included Ashton Carter, deputy assistant secretary of defense for international-security affairs in Clinton's first term, and David Tarbell, a Pentagon veteran who heads the Defense Technology Security Administration.

A sterling illustration of this group's influence came in 1994, when McDonnell Douglas applied for permission to sell machine tools to a Chinese government agency. The Chinese had told McDonnell Douglas officials they wanted the machine tools in order to build 40 commercial airplanes known as Trunkliners. But upon reviewing the applications, many Defense Department officials became convinced the machine tools were destined for the Chinese military. (Even Wallerstein acknowledged in congressional testimony that "machine tools are, first of all, an item which is absolutely essential to other military systems.") A Defense Intelligence Agency analysis said the amount of material McDonnell Douglas proposed to sell was well above what China needed to build the 40 aircraft. A separate analysis by the Defense Technology Security Administration (partially reprinted in John Fialka's new book, *War By Other Means*) noted China's habit of selling missile systems to Iran and Pakistan and said it would be impossible for the United States to prevent the McDonnell Douglas machine tools from being used by China's military. These sentiments were echoed by officials in the Navy, the Air Force, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Other discrepancies in China's account of what it would do with the machine tools were revealed, but Clinton appointees continued to push for the sale. Staffers at the Defense Technology Security Administration never had any doubt the applications would be approved. In fact, Wallerstein, Perry, and the Pentagon's other liberalization advocates strongly supported the McDonnell Douglas sale, and Commerce approved the licenses in September 1994.

It didn't take long to see why so many Pentagon officials had been opposed. Just six months after the export licenses were approved, McDonnell Douglas discovered its machine tools were being diverted from the intended commercial aircraft facility to another where fighter aircraft and cruise missiles were produced for the People's Liberation Army. A November 1996 General Accounting Office assessment notes that once McDonnell Douglas reported the diversion in April 1995, it took seven months for the Commerce Department to begin an investigation. Commerce and the Customs Service are currently investigating under the direction of the Justice Department, and a grand jury is pondering the matter. Yet there is no indication that the episode has altered the administration's see-no-evil posture.

Another example of Wallerstein and other top Pentagon officials' seemingly blind commitment to their policy came in the now-controversial case of supercomputers. Easing controls on supercomputer exports was a longtime goal of the liberalizers, who argued that with the spread of technology the controls were useless and adversely affected American companies. This group got a big boost in 1992 when a number of prominent Silicon Valley executives, who opposed the Bush administration's relatively strict standards for granting export licenses, organized in favor of Bill Clinton's candidacy.

Once Clinton was elected, it didn't take long for the climate to change. In September 1993, shortly after hosting a White House lunch for Edward McCracken, chief executive officer of Silicon Graphics, Clinton wrote McCracken a letter spelling out the reforms he was considering. They included liberalizing computer and telecommunications controls, reducing processing times, expanding distribution licenses, and eliminating unilateral U.S. export controls. "One reason I ran for president," Clinton wrote, "was to tailor export controls to the realities of a post-Cold War world."

THERE WERE MANY DISCREPANCIES IN CHINA'S ACCOUNT, BUT CLINTON APPOINTEES STILL PUSHED FOR THE SALE OF THE MACHINE TOOLS.

On September 29, 1993, Clinton announced a massive liberalization of export controls on supercomputers, but that wasn't enough for some in the administration. Shortly after the announcement, the Pentagon set

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out to determine how much further liberalization could go, and Wallerstein had the study assigned to an outside consultant named Seymour Goodman.

Hiring Goodman to perform the study telegraphed the administration's intentions, since Goodman had regularly agitated for liberalization on panels convened by the National Academy of Sciences. By contrast, the Pentagon's technical experts had little sympathy for liberalization. The arrangement with Goodman was both a means of circumventing these in-house skeptics and an instance of the cronyism infecting the Pentagon. Wallerstein knew Goodman from the National Academy of Sciences, and Perry knew him from their work together at Stanford University's Center for International Security and Arms Control.

As it turned out, the administration deemed Goodman's initial conclusions excessively timid. Wallerstein, Tarbell, and Ken Flamm, deputy assistant secretary of defense for economic security, rejected a draft in the summer of 1995. Pentagon sources told me all copies were ordered confiscated and Goodman was instructed to recommend policy changes that would leave even fewer U.S. supercomputers subject to export licensing.

Goodman did as he was told—and in the process made some of those participating in the study unhappy. A confidential Energy Department analysis charged that the revised recommendations were ill advised and had been arrived at through dubious methodology. "The impact of the decontrol levels," said the Energy memo,

> will be to permanently mortgage U.S. technological superiority, which is absolutely essential to the successful projection of U.S. power now and in the future. The report's authors never mention what military uses potential adversaries can use these HSC's [high-speed computers] for. Nor do they assess the impact upon U.S. military power or on future defense spending requirements that such availability may portend.

Goodman acknowledged in his revised study that "time constraints were such that we were not able to do a comprehensive review." He urged "a more comprehensive examination" of the question as soon as possible. But those cautions didn't stop Clinton from announcing sweeping changes in October 1995. To the delight of the high-tech industry, U.S. companies received wide new latitude to export supercomputers. Most striking, the old standard for determining whether an item could be exported—whether it was already available in foreign markets—was jettisoned. As recommended in the Goodman study, U.S. companies can now export any product *expected to be available* in foreign markets within two years. Another provision in Clinton's announcement decrees—amazingly—that American companies must seek government permission to export supercomputers to a list of countries including China and Russia only if they believe the machines are actually destined for military use.

It hasn't taken long for the adverse consequences of these policy shifts to appear. Earlier this year, McCracken's Silicon Graphics acknowledged selling four supercomputers to one of Russia's two premier nuclear-weapons design laboratories, Chelyabinsk-70. Silicon Graphics officials didn't seek a license for the export because they claim to have thought Chelyabinsk-70 intended to use the computers for environmental and ecological purposes. And then at a June congressional

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hearing, Commerce's William Reinsch made the startling announcement that 47 supercomputers had been sold to China over the previous 15 months. Stephen Bryen, who oversaw export controls in the Reagan Pentagon, notes that this transfer of technology is "unprecedented" in U.S. history. Bryen speculates that it gives China more supercomputers than are currently available to the Department of Defense and all the national laboratories put together. In fact, there is no reason to assume that these 47 are all the U.S. supercomputers that have made their way to China; given the laxity of reporting requirements, experts say there could be hundreds more that are capable of being easily upgraded.

Yet even in the face of this evidence, the administration shows no sign of recognizing the danger of its export policies. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright did protest, in a June 30 meeting with China's foreign minister, Qian Qichen, that an American supercomputer had been diverted to a Chinese military facility. But more revealing is the White House's opposition to an amendment to the Defense Department authorization bill that would place new demands on American companies looking to export supercomputers to countries like China and Russia. The proposal, cosponsored by Rep. Floyd Spence, the conservative chairman of the National Security Committee, and Rep. Ron Dellums, a liberal Democrat, is a small step toward restoring some integrity to the export-control process. But when Senate Republican Thad Cochran introduced a more stringent proposal a few months ago, the White House worked hand in glove with the computer industry to fight it, and it received only 27 votes.

As a result of the Clinton administration's virtual abandonment of national-security curbs on U.S. exports, the United States has joined China and Russia as a leading contributor to the global proliferation of weapons-making technology. Yet not only does the administration oppose the Spence/Dellums amendment, it also has asked Seymour Goodman to conduct still another study of supercomputer liberalization—under the supervision of none other than Mitch Wallerstein. Thus, the lingering question isn't whether the study will recommend further liberalization, but only how reckless its recommendations will be and how much damage they will do to U.S. security.

One has to wonder what sort of disaster it will take for the White House to rethink its aversion to export controls. Seven years ago it took Iraq's invasion of Kuwait before the Bush administration cut off Saddam Hussein. In the 1930s it took Hitler's invasion of Poland before British prime minister Neville Chamberlain stopped selling high-performance airplane engines to Nazi Germany. "Trade, like religion, should recognize no frontiers," Chamberlain famously pronounced. Mitch Wallerstein and other Clinton administration officials might want to contemplate the consequences of those words as they arm unreliable nations in their quest to please American business. ♦

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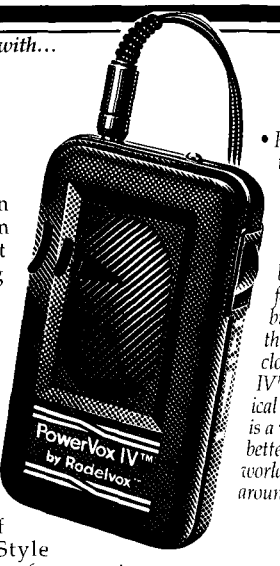

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"But Gingrich is a bit sleazy. Well, isn't he?" asked the young man. "He's an albatross around the neck of the Republicans."

"I understand what you're saying," replied the older man. "You say Gingrich is an albatross. I say the polls, if you believe them, agree with you. Sleazy? I think that's a little strong. But I'll say this."

"Go on."

"Our President is sleazy. His polls are away up. As between him and Newt, at the very worst for Gingrich, it's a tie."

"So explain why the President's so popular and Gingrich isn't."

"It's not easy, I'll confess, but here goes."

"Go on."

"Clinton gets a break from the likes of *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*. You'd think that most of the rest of the media follow these two," argued the older man.

"So?" replied the younger one.

"Look, I know Punch Sulzberger. I've had nothing but fair treatment from Punch and his son. Some of what I've written they didn't like but they printed it."

"And?"

"And despite it all, *The New York Times* for one has ridden hard on Newt and not so hard on Clinton. I'm suggesting that it's unfair to Gingrich but it will all come out to his advantage in the end."

"How so?"

"More and more on Clinton and Mrs. Clinton is sure to surface. It will be the same old stuff, but one of these days someone will come out of the shadows. That's when the President's and the First Lady's luck will have run out."

"How do you know?"

"I don't. But I'll bet on it. And what's more."

"What's more?" asked the young man.

"You can see it. You can feel it right now. Gingrich is coming back. He's making sense. It may sound funny but even his body language, the way he looks, it's like it was the return of the prodigal. It's really that. Americans can forgive. Maybe they won't forget, but they can forgive."

"Go on."

"You see, the media has forgiven Clinton almost from the start, too soon, I'd say. People will feel less and less sorry for him as they will begin to feel more and more sorry for Newt. You'll see. They'll forgive him. There will be an end to it."

"Anything else?"

"Yes, there is. Unless something more of a harmful nature turns up in the life of Gingrich, people will have known the worst. Not so with the Clintons. The story isn't over. There are still some chapters missing. Only the Clintons know the contents but, not trusting either of the Clintons, the people will more and more come to expect the worst. That's not Gingrich's problem. It's the Clintons'."

"Is that all?" the young man looked troubled asking the question.

"Yes," answered the old man.

"We'll see," the young man cut in. "I hope you're wrong."

"So do I," the older man concluded. "For the sake of the nation, I hope I'm wrong. But I wouldn't bet on it. Where there's smoke there's fire. For the Clintons, it's smoldering. For Gingrich, there are only dying embers."

"You mean, the heat's still on the Clintons and not on Gingrich," the young man said.

"That's exactly what I mean," the older man spoke with confidence.

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SATCHMO BETTER BLUES

A Wonderful Biography of Louis Armstrong

By Jay Nordlinger

What will Louis Armstrong's most devoted admirers not claim for him? They say that he was the founder of jazz. That he is the most popular, most influential musician of the 20th century. That his voice, even now, is the most recognizable in all the world. Strangely, each of these claims may be true. There was no single founder of jazz, obviously—despite Jelly Roll Morton's lifelong bragging—but Armstrong, more than anyone else, coaxed it along. Of his popularity and influence, there is no doubt: He is beloved on every continent, and the effects of his career are ubiquitous. The voice? It is, indeed, one of the most familiar sounds on earth: raspy, sunlit, unfailingly musical.

Armstrong has been dead for over 25 years, yet the record stores still brim with his cuts, from the 1920s and his group "The Hot Five" to the 1960s and "What a Wonderful World." Many today are apt to think of him as the sweet, avuncular fellow of this later period, but, in his salad days, Armstrong was the baddest, hippest, most shocking "cat" around (and it was he who placed "cat" in the national vocabulary, along with dozens of other swing terms and phrases—"swing," for another).

Before Armstrong, jazz was largely a parochial affair. But he plucked it from the brothels, dope dens, and honky-tonks of New Orleans and turned it loose. "No one had ever heard anything like it," Duke Ellington said, "and his impact cannot be put into words." His playing reflected his personality exactly. Notes poured from him naturally and easily, as elements of his conversation (which is how he thought of them). He played the cornet like he sang, and he sang like he played the cornet. He was not the most virtuosic of hornmen—he missed notes liberally, he often blared, and his upper register was terribly pinched—but he had enough technical dazzle to make heads spin. He could milk every last ounce of pleasure from a song, and he always imparted his meaning and spirit to the players around him. And no one—but no one—got a bigger kick out of his act than he himself did: In a recording of "Lazy River," he can be heard to exclaim, after a particularly successful solo, "Oh, you dog, you riffin' tonight!"

Jay Nordlinger, associate editor and music critic of THE WEEKLY STANDARD, *last wrote about the late Ben Hogan.*

Laurence Bergreen
Louis Armstrong
An Extravagant Life
Broadway Books, 564 pp., $30

His blues were both joyous and mournful. His improvisations, though not lacking in sophistication, were comprehensible and uncluttered. He may rightly be called the originator—certainly the popularizer—of "scat," the mode of singing in which nonsense syllables are substituted for words. When he recorded "Heebie Jeebies" in 1926, he had all of Chicago jumping to it, as men greeted one another on the streets with Armstrong's newly taught "jive" ("jive" being another of the words he brought from New Orleans). He had the gift of taking something bound to a peculiar place and time—"I'll Be Glad When You Dead, You Rascal, You," for example—and universalizing it. One hesitates to say it, but he had extraordinary rhythm, never losing the thread of a piece, even—no, especially—when sustaining a note high above the ruckus.

To his humor and invention, there was no end. In a 1928 recording of "Ain't Misbehavin'," he interpolates a bracing quotation from Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* (then a relatively new work). To open "Cornet Chop Suey," one of his own compositions, he sounds an elaborate bugle call. He managed to breathe life into even the weakest of songs: Could any other performer possibly bring off "When It's Sleepy Time Down South"? About a certain Armstrong gimmick, the critic Irving Kolodin wrote, "It's mad, it's meaningless, it's hokum of the first order, but the effect is electrifying." Next to King Louis, all others were "like so many Salvation Army cornetists."

So, his playing could hardly be better known. But his personal story, by comparison, is obscure. Why this should be is a mystery. His life—pulsing with exploits, struggle, and originality—fairly cries out for attention. Ralph Ellison once wrote to a friend, "Shakespeare invented Caliban. Who the hell dreamed up Louis?" To the historian, playwright, poet, and filmmaker, there is no shortage of material.

Armstrong was born to the 15-year-old daughter of former slaves. He grew up in the notorious Storyville section of New Orleans amid prostitutes, killers, and thieves. He worked for a time as a pimp—like

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practically every other male he knew—and took a hooker as the first of his four wives. At 16, he adopted a son, the infant of a family friend who died in childbirth.

His appetite—for women, food, marijuana, and, queerly, laxatives—was gargantuan. He so loved marijuana—which he smoked every day for 40 years—that he planned to title an installment of his autobiography *Gage*, one of his pet names for the drug. (His manager talked him out of it.) His faith in a particular laxative was so strong that he all but dedicated the final years of his life to evangelizing about it, much to the dismay and embarrassment of those close to him. He chronicled his life obsessively, jotting down observations and reminiscences at every opportunity. He bought his first typewriter in 1922—so as to send long, detailed letters back home to New Orleans—and he never ceased to type until his death in 1971.

In short, it would seem impossible to write a dull book about him. And Laurence Bergreen—biographer previously of Al Capone, Irving Berlin, and James Agee—has not. His new life of Armstrong is unsparingly researched and sparklingly realized. Ralph Ellison was right: It is hard to imagine who dreamed up this character. Shakespeare might have rejected him on grounds of incredibility.

As Armstrong told it—and always understood it—he was born on the Fourth of July, 1900. So did he link himself to the American Century and its sound. (He called the first chapter of his 1952 autobiography "Jazz and I Get Born Together.") But his actual birth date, sadly, was the more prosaic August 4, 1901. His father abandoned him immediately, and his mother went off to hustle, leaving him with his grandmother. Occasionally, he was taken to a Baptist church, where, as he would remember, "I acquired my singing tactics." His formal education was almost nil, his prospects frightfully bleak.

At 6, Louis caught one of the most important of his life's many breaks: He was befriended by an immigrant Jewish family, the Karnoffskys, who were junk peddlers. They fed him, encouraged him, and took him on their daily rounds. In time, Louis paid a dime for a tin horn, with which he attracted customers to the Karnoffsky wagon. He would blow on it anything he could think of, anything he heard. It proved, he would recall, "a great asset," both in business and in music. Eventually, one of the Karnoffsky brothers found for him a battered old cornet in a pawnshop. It was Louis's first proper instrument, and he always remembered it with enormous fondness and gratitude.

BY AGE 11, HE HAD SEEN MORE OF THE WICKED WORLD THAN MOST PEOPLE WOULD IN SEVERAL LIFETIMES. YET HE HAD BARELY BEGUN.

From the Karnoffskys, he drew many significant social lessons as well, lessons to which he would return again and again, particularly in his twilight years, when he examined his life and his philosophical gleanings intensely. He felt a kinship with the Karnoffskys, who, like their black neighbors, labored against discrimination and abuse. He marveled at their perseverance and thrift. He would write, "Many kids suffered with hungers because their fathers could have done some work for a change. No, they would not do that. It would be too much like right. They'd rather lazy around and gamble." But the Jews, he noticed, "always managed to put away their nickels and dimes." "If it wasn't for the nice Jewish people," he avowed, "we would have starved many a time. I will love the Jewish people all of my life."

Meantime, jazz was growing out of its swaddling clothes, and Louis was mesmerized by it, absorbing its cadences in, among other haunts, the infamous "Funky Butt Hall." Joseph "King" Oliver reigned supreme, and he was Louis's idol and role model. The mature Armstrong would proclaim that Oliver was "the baddest sombitch in Storyville on cornet—*B'lieve* that." Louis was also watching the preachers, criminals, and supernaturalists. He was starting to develop his own musical language, built on the city's myriad strains. His delight in wordplay—puns, jokes, asides—was perpetual. Where did scat come from? The story is told that Armstrong began to scat when the music fell from his stand and he was forced to abandon the words. But this, though charming, is untrue: Scat came from the minstrels, comedians, and voodoo artists. It had another source, as well: Armstrong once confided to Cab Calloway that he had been influenced by the Jews he heard at prayer. He never mentioned this publicly, however, fearing to give offense.

By the age of 11, Louis had seen more of the wicked world than most people would in several lifetimes. Yet he had barely begun. One night, he was making tough in the streets with his pals and fired off a gun. He was—fortunately—nabbed by the police and sentenced to the "Colored Waif's Home," where he thrilled to the discipline and instruction he received. He immediately set his sights on the bugler's post, and won it. Within a year, he had become leader of the Home's band. The music director later recollected that his young charge "could sing real well, even though his voice was coarse [then, too]. I'd play the horn and he'd dance, then I'd put down my horn and he'd pick it up and start playing it." Laurence Bergreen notes that if Louis had been sent to an adult jail, instead of to the Waif's Home, "the outcome of his

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entire life might have been drastically different." Armstrong always spoke reverently about the Home and its rescuing taskmasters, and he took pride in visiting it after he had become the country's most celebrated musician.

Louis's musical education proceeded in fits and spurts. He somehow laid his hands on the operatic 78s of the period—Enrico Caruso, Amelita Galli-Curci, John McCormack—and he listened to them repeatedly. He learned to read a little music when he was booked to play with the Fate Marable band on the *Dixie Belle*, a Mississippi riverboat. The "reading orchestras" had always been disdained as stiff and effete by the Storyville bordello-players (some of whom could, in fact, read music, though they kept this guilty secret to themselves). But Louis perceived that reading would enhance, rather than stifle, his playing: "I wanted to do more than fake the music all the time," he later explained, "because there is more to music than just style."

He stayed with the Marable group, up and down the river, for two years, entertaining the boat's white patrons, entering towns that had seldom seen black people, encountering brute racism all over. In Davenport, Iowa, he met the 17-year-old Bix Beiderbecke, who became a disciple and fast friend. At St. Louis—a redoubt of ragtime—the New Orleans players were introduced as "honored guests from a town where they even have jazz with their breakfast." The experience that Louis gained from this tenure was invaluable, but he chafed at conformity, desiring to lead an ensemble, rather than merely blend with one.

Then in 1922, he received the most fabled telegram in the history of jazz: King Oliver, who had left New Orleans for glory in Chicago, was asking Louis to join him—had "sent for me," as Armstrong would always put it. Before parting, Louis received a piece of advice from a bouncer friend, Slippers: "When you go up north, Dipper [one of Louis's innumerable nicknames], be sure and get yourself a white man that will put his hand on your shoulder and say, 'This is my n——er.'" Slippers, Armstrong later observed, "was a crude sonofabitch, but he loved me and my music." And Armstrong, even in the fullness of his stardom, clung to the advice unyieldingly.

Chas Fagan

Louis Armstrong

The white men who controlled King Oliver and every other black musician were mobsters, chief among them Al Capone, whom Louis would describe as "a nice little cute fat boy—young—like some professor who had just come out of college to teach or something." Armstrong was never free of gangsters—not even abroad—and he accommodated himself to them, submitting to their tyranny for the protection they might afford.

As Oliver's apprentice, Louis refined his technique, burnished his distinctive musicality, and in due course surpassed his mentor, whose chops—after years of overwork and tobacco-chewing—were wearing thin. He became acquainted with the most accomplished entertainers of the day, including Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, whose work he analyzed and copied. He also met the pianist Lil Hardin—"The Hot Miss Lil," as she was billed—and she became his collaborator and second wife. In April 1923, Louis waxed the first of his thousand-plus records, with Oliver and the "Creole Jazz Band" (which, of course, contained not a single Creole). The company was Gennett, its location Richmond, Indiana, a Klan bastion at the time, where the group could not spend the night.

Louis's reputation quickly reached

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New York, and he was again "sent for," this time by Fletcher Henderson, who held sway at the Roseland Ballroom. So did "Little Louis" from New Orleans—"Dippermouth," "Gate," "Satchelmouth," "Pops," "Papa Dip" (only white people ever called him "Louie")—join the Harlem Renaissance, in 1925. The Henderson band, too, was a "reading orchestra," and Louis had yet to achieve complete proficiency. In an early rehearsal, he roared right through a marking that read *pp* (meaning *pianissimo*, or "very soft"). Asked what he was doing, he responded, "I thought it meant 'pound plenty.'"

He "put the heat to the beat" at the Cotton Club, and was obliged to dance to the tune of Dutch Schultz, the vile mobster whom Bergreen describes as "a one-man crime wave." Before long, Armstrong was addicted to his constant companion, marijuana, which he called "an assistant, a friend, a nice cheap drunk." "Very good for asthma," he remarked, "relaxes your nerves." Besides which, "I was never born to be a square about anything, no matter what." The weed took a toll, however, and he was never quite as sharp under it as he supposed. His earliest recordings—pre-dope—are, in most cases, clearly superior to his later ones.

He also ate prodigiously, all the while purging himself with what his mother had called a "physic." (She had adhered to a homemade recipe, which included "pepper grass" gathered down by the railroad tracks.) Armstrong's weight fluctuated wildly throughout his adult life, and he pressed his theories about food and hygiene on everyone he met. He enjoyed signing his letters, "Red Beans and Ricely Yours," in honor of his favorite dish and his hometown's staple. He passed out cellophane packets of his preferred laxative, "Swiss Kriss," to one and all—not excluding heads of state and other dignitaries—and, most bizarrely, he had cards printed up that pictured him seated on a toilet, as though glimpsed through a keyhole, and that bore the legend "SATCHMO-SLOGAN (Leave It All Behind Ya)."

The generation of black musicians that succeeded Armstrong—to whom it owed more than it ever knew or acknowledged—had no patience for his antics and long-suffering warmth, nor for his New Orleans-style jazz, which had left the avant-garde for the semi-historical. The bebop crowd regarded him as an embarrassing throwback, shucking and smiling and waving his hands. Miles Davis complained of his elder's "plantation image." For his part, Armstrong had equally little use for the boppers, with "that out-of-the-world music, that pipe-dream music, that whole modern malice." "You get all them weird chords," he snorted, "which don't mean nothing, and first people get curious about it just because it's new, but they get tired of it because it's really no good and you got no melody to remember, no beat to dance to." They might scorn him as a shuffling minstrel, but the music they produced—the flatted-fifth miasma—repelled him: "Personally," he told an interviewer in 1948, "I wouldn't play that horn if I played a hundred years. You don't have to worry about me stealing those riffs." Davis, Dizzy Gillespie, and the rest "play one note, and nobody knows if it's the right note or just one of them weird things where you can always make like that was just the note you were trying to hit."

THE BOPPERS MIGHT HAVE SCORNED ARMSTRONG AS A MINSTREL, BUT THE MUSIC THEY PRODUCED REPELLED HIM.

Armstrong was no radical, but neither was he a racial pushover, and he broke his fair share of barriers (as the first black person to host a national radio program, for example). He liked to point to his instrument and say, "You see that horn? That horn ain't prejudiced. And neither am I. A note's a note." Bergreen writes that, as late as 1960—in Connecticut, of all places—Armstrong was refused the use of a restroom. A photographer accompanying him recounted, "I will never forget the look on Louis's face. Hero that he was, world-famous, a favorite to millions of people, America's most identifiable entertainer, and yet excluded in the most humiliating fashion from a common convenience."

As Bergreen understands, "The grin was so endearing, and the growl so comforting, that it is easy to overlook Armstrong's essential subversiveness. Although he seemed to belong wholly to the mainstream, his principal allegiances were to the underground of American existence, from which he had emerged."

In his final incarnation, as "Ambassador Satch," Armstrong made goodwill tours for the State Department, received tumultuously in places as dissimilar as Denmark and Ghana. But in 1957, after seeing on television the harassment of black schoolchildren in Little Rock, he canceled a tour, declaring, "The way they are treating my people in the South, the government can go to hell." He dismissed Arkansas governor Orval Faubus as an "uneducated plow boy." When President Eisenhower dispatched federal troops, he telegrammed the White House: "If you decide to walk into the schools with the little colored kids, take me along, Daddy."

Laurence Bergreen has written an enthralling book. At points, it is touched with magic, as it describes, for example, the sound of Fate Marable's calliope, "amid the quiet," reverberating "for miles around, the music reflecting off the surface of the

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water as it flowed around the riverboat." Bergreen is especially deft at evoking old New Orleans: For a brief history of this least American of American cities, one could do worse than the 10 or so pages at the beginning of *Louis Armstrong*. He weaves in and out of stories nicely, interspersing social history and jazz commentary, making the most of his subject's voluminous scribblings. He tells the grand tales almost by accident, pausing briefly to note that Bix Beiderbecke and Babe Ruth were friends and brother guzzlers: "The slugger was so big and Bix's apartment so small that Ruth took the doors off the hinges so that he could pass from one room to another. These two dying embers of the Jazz Age endlessly drank and talked about music and baseball."

His book is harmed, just slightly, by a tendency to hyperbole, the itch to overreach: "There was power and even an edge of anger to [Armstrong's] laughter. It was a cosmic shout of defiance." "In the end, it was Louis's animating spirit of joy, as much as his music, that was responsible for his transforming vision." Bergreen has Armstrong "at the peak of his powers" one too many times. Some of the editing is clumsy: Armstrong exhibits "uncharacteristic choler" in one paragraph and succumbs to "a flash of rare bitterness" in the next.

But this biography will be devoured by all who pick it up. It is full of the life it describes. Said Armstrong, "My whole life has been happiness. Through all my misfortunes, I did not plan anything. Life was there for me, and I accepted it. And life, whatever came out, has been beautiful to me, and I love everybody." And he meant it. ♦

THE DECLINE OF WEST

A Mediocre Entry in the Library of America

By Christopher Caldwell

On Friday the 13th of December 1940, F. Scott Fitzgerald attended a dinner party at the home of Nathanael West, who was rapidly becoming his best friend in Hollywood. It was the last time the two writers ever saw each other. Eight days later, Fitzgerald leapt up from the sofa where he was reading the sports section and fell down dead of a heart attack into the fireplace. The following afternoon, West, most likely having heard of Fitzgerald's death, was rushing home to Los Angeles after cutting short a hunting trip to Mexico. West drove through a stop sign in El Centro, California, and hit a vegetable truck. He and his wife died on the spot. West was 37.

Nathanael West
Novels and Other Writings
Library of America, 829 pp., $35

Fitzgerald was mourned as a giant of the Lost Generation even if obituarists opined that his critical star still stood a bit artificially high. West's death passed almost unnoticed. But starting in the late 1940s, when all his novels were brought back into print, West's following grew steadily, and he came to be seen as an unsung satirical genius. By now, his anonymity has been more than remedied: West is so firmly fixed in critical favor that he has beaten Fitzgerald into the Library of America, the gorgeous uniform-edition series that is today's clearest physical benchmark of what constitutes the American literary canon.

The collection has been chosen—and capped with a splendid chronology and notes—by Harvard English professor Sacvan Bercovitch. It includes all four of West's novels, which together do not quite reach 400 pages; one film adaptation of someone else's novel; a play that ran for two nights and has not been revived; various scraps of ad copy, letters, outlines, and grant proposals; and one poem. This doesn't sound like much of a career, and it's not. Sometime in the past generation, West has gone from being a fetish of the discerning into perhaps the most overrated writer in the American tradition.

West was born Nathan Weinstein in 1903 to a family of thoroughly assimilated New York Jewish immigrants—not perhaps thoroughly enough for West, who changed his name in 1926. That was the only concession he ever made to bourgeois mores as he understood them. It would be easier to credit the sincerity of West's rebellion if his unconventionality had not so often served his own bourgeois interests. He was a rotten student, habitually truant, at DeWitt Clinton High School, where he was enrolled with Mortimer Adler and Lionel Trilling (neither of whom remembered ever seeing him in class). With no hope of graduating, he nonetheless got admitted to Tufts by stealing his transcript and altering it to give him enough credits to graduate. When West didn't bother to attend classes at Tufts either, he was asked to withdraw at Thanksgiving of his freshman year. Undaunted, he got from a girlfriend in the admissions office the transcript of *another* Nathan Weinstein—this one from Dorchester, Mass.—and used it to transfer into Brown, where he passed himself off until graduation as a

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demobbed Navy veteran.

At Brown he acquired a reputation as a clothes-horse, a deep interest in Christian theology and French belles-lettres that would inform most of his novels, a lifelong best friend in S.J. Perelman (who would marry West's sister Laura in 1929), and a troublesome case of gonorrhea, the first of several that would cause him intermittent agony for the rest of his life. His was not a happy love life. The Depression and his mother's disapproval kept him from joining a first fiancée in France. A second, the fashion model Alice Shepard, ditched him when she learned he had been seduced by a young friend of hers (Lillian Hellman, Bercovitch informs us; her identity had hitherto been suppressed by biographers). Only in the last two years of his life did he find a woman he was wholly in sympathy with, Eileen McKenney, whose sister Ruth McKenney had made her the subject of an enormously popular series of *New Yorker* stories that were collected as *My Sister Eileen*.

West met McKenney in Los Angeles, where he'd moved in 1935 to work as a scenarist. In the year he died, he sold two film treatments for $35,000, or "a thousand dollars a page," as he excitedly put it. But that was the first sign of an especially productive professional life. (At summer camp, in fact, he had earned the nickname "Pep" for his inability—or unwillingness—to get out of bed.) West was dependent for his income on his father's development business, booming for decades but largely wiped out in the New York real-estate slump that ran from the mid-1920s to the mid-1930s. During those poor years, West served as manager of two of his father's failing hotel properties: the Kenmore Hall (on East 23rd St.) and the Sutton Club (on East 56th). The latter he would turn into a free doss-house for his favorite Depression-strapped writers, among them Dashiell Hammett, Erskine Caldwell, Edmund Wilson, and James T. Farrell. It was a consideration that would be amply repaid: Many of his tenants would blurb his books, including Wilson, who praised *Miss Lonelyhearts* and *The Day of the Locust* as "more finished and complete as works of art than almost anything else produced by his generation."

West is often looked at as a quintessentially American writer, the great importer of Tin Pan Alley-type gag-writing, slapstick, and deadpan into serious fiction. And yet, although he can indeed be funny in a broad way—there's the Aw-Kum-On Garage in *A Cool Million*, the Indian chief Kiss-My-Towkas in *The Day of the Locust*—that funniness is always at war with an irrepressible pomposity and didacticism. What's more, the structure of all of his novels comes directly from France, specifically from a fascination with Dada and French surrealism picked up on a three-month trip to Paris in 1926.

West's first work, *The Dream Life of Balso Snell* (1931), less a novel than a 40-page riff about voyaging up the anus of the Trojan Horse, is too slight to detain us, but his first serious novel, *Miss Lonelyhearts* (1933), has the basic West problem: trying to support a deadly serious *thesis* with slapstick routines and cartoon-deep stock characters. The novel tells the story of a writer of an agony-aunt column who is driven insane by the letters he gets. As the protagonist explains his predicament to his girlfriend:

> "Perhaps I can make you understand. Let's start from the beginning. A man is hired to give advice to the readers of a newspaper. The job is a circulation stunt and the whole staff considers it a joke. He welcomes the job, for it might lead to a gossip column, and anyway he's tired of being a leg man. He too considers the job a joke, but after several months at it, the joke begins to escape him. He sees that the majority of the letters are profoundly humble pleas for moral and spiritual advice, that they are inarticulate expressions of genuine suffering. He also discovers that his correspondents take him seriously. For the first time in his life, he is forced to examine the values by which he lives. This examination shows him that he is the victim of the joke and not its perpetrator."

That's a promising treatment (in the Hollywood sense), but when West tries to put meat on it, the resulting novel is disjointed and implausible. There is some beautifully desperate set-piece writing in the letters. But the character of Miss Lonelyhearts himself—ridiculously hard-boiled and heartless—is at odds with the anguish West attributes to him.

Imprisoned in the same deadpan comic tone, West simply cannot make him convincing as one who'd be upset with these sob stories. (He can't even distinguish him from the other male characters in the book.) Nor is Miss Lonelyhearts the kind of person who'd go through the religious conversion that forms the centerpiece of the last few chapters—about the only psychologically convincing moment in the book. Miss Lonelyhearts has been torn from his youthful Christianity by the mockery of his friends, and West is always on the verge of taking this conversion very seriously. But to the extent that he does, he undermines the absurdism of the book's final page, in which a jealous husband shoots Miss Lonelyhearts dead.

Defenders of West on modernist grounds would say that it's unfair to look for character development in his work, that these people aren't meant to be verisimilar in the human-interest, slice-of-life sense. Of course they're not, but West can't even keep them well enough under control to make them plausible bearers of his points about the meaninglessness of life.

This narrative glibness keeps West's characters from living or reflecting in any very profound way, a problem that becomes more severe in his third novel, *A Cool Million*, which

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puts West's politics on show. These politics were radical, although mostly of the standing-in-picket-lines, signing-petitions variety. Under the influence of his wife, he was drifting into fairly close contact with the Communist party, even contemplating a meeting with CPUSA head Earl Browder in the months before his death. Yet he was neither sophisticated nor passionate as a political animal; he was bored stiff at the one CP meeting he attended, and complained loudly when editors of *Contact*, a magazine with which he was involved in the 1930s, wanted to devote an issue to Communist fiction.

In *A Cool Million*'s plot, slavishly dependent on (more francophilia) *Candide*, the ingenuous Lemuel Pitkin of Vermont tries to earn the money to save his mother from foreclosure threatened by rapacious local bankers. Setting out for New York with fifteen dollars in his pocket, he is repeatedly robbed, arrested, and maimed. He has his teeth pulled by a prison doctor, his eye destroyed in a horse accident, and his leg amputated after a car crash, and even gets scalped during a misunderstanding with some Indian chiefs. The Cunégonde character, Lemuel's childhood sweetheart Betty Prail, gets raped in every other chapter.

But this is a *roman à thèse*, and these Grand Guignol gags are badly mismatched with West's dead-serious subtext: that the Depression portended the rise of fascism in America unless measures were taken. Lemuel falls in with a riot-inciting ex-president named Mr. Whipple, who seeks to galvanize the American middle class behind his National Revolutionary Party, a nascent fascist movement. Mr. Whipple's paranoia about international bankers and "Bolsheviks" is derided throughout, but West is so unable to avoid an easy joke that he peoples the book with actual banking conspirators (Lemuel is beaten bloody by one of them, called Operative 6384XM), Bolsheviks (Lemuel is kidnapped by the Third International), the fellow-traveling poet Snodgrasse (whose revolutionary desire "was really a desire for revenge . . . having lost faith in himself, he thought it his duty to undermine the nation's faith in itself"), and actual secret agents (one of whom, wearing a "false beard," shoots Lem dead, at which point he becomes a Horst Wessel-type martyr of American fascism).

This is not irony; it's the price paid for a slapdash architecture too heavily dependent on its model. Leibnizian optimism is not fascism, for one thing; Candide's experience is enough to refute Pangloss, but why should Lemuel give Mr. Whipple's fascism a second thought? Especially since the enemies of fascism are the book's worst villains. And West has no control over his tone: There's a uniformity of pitch to the whole book, the same sneering wiseacre scorning, that applies to *everyone*. The reader leaves the novel with the feeling of a society so corrupt that no one should particularly care if fascism triumphs—clearly far from West's intent.

WEST'S POLITICS WERE RADICAL, THOUGH MOSTLY OF THE STANDING-IN-PICKET-LINES VARIETY.

The same problem besets *The Day of the Locust* (1939). Even in his last, best novel, West can't reconcile the portentousness of his thesis with the shallowness of his characters. The painter Tod Hackett, West's alter ego, has to navigate a surrealist world of whores, clowns, folk-remedy salesmen, drugstore cowboys, religious extremists, Mexican con men, and a malign dwarf who speaks in snippets out of the Three Stooges ("So you're a wise guy, hah, a know-it-all?"). The narrative voice reminds one of the clown-cum-door-to-door-salesman introduced in the first few pages, of whom West writes, "Now he clowned continuously. It was his sole method of defense."

All these characters congregate in a seedy apartment building. Tod falls in love with a gorgeous but talentless starlet who'll sleep with anyone in Hollywood except him, and is doomed to fail at any career she might choose, save prostitution. None of her various amatory adventures amounts to anything. Nor does the cockfighting enterprise of her cowboy boyfriend and his Mexican sidekick. Nor does the fretting of the valetudinarian hayseed who takes her into his home. For like *A Cool Million*, *The Day of the Locust* grafts its cast of cartoon characters onto a ponderously presented sociopolitical thesis: that the mental landscape of Hollywood leads to mass violence. Next to that apocalyptic proposition, West's characters look flimsy and frivolous.

That Hollywood is one large fantasy industry is neatly evoked, as when Tod wanders through a back lot:

> From the steps of the temple, he could see in the distance a road lined with Lombardy poplars. It was the one on which he had lost the cuirassiers. He pushed his way through a tangle of briars, old flats and iron junk, skirting the skeleton of a Zeppelin, a bamboo stockade, an adobe fort, the wooden horse of Troy, a flight of baroque palace stairs that started in a bed of weeds and ended against the branches of an oak, part of the Fourteenth Street elevated station, a Dutch windmill, the bones of a dinosaur, the upper half of the Merrimac, a corner of a Mayan temple, until he finally reached the road.

This is a crazy world in which people seek crazy consolations. The Hollywood masses, with their bizarre

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houses in every kind of style, their isolated, automobile-based existence, their insane religious cults, loom as vaguely threatening. Tod thinks he might paint them:

> He spent his nights at the different Hollywood churches, drawing the worshipers. He visited the "Church of Christ, Physical" where holiness was attained through the constant use of chest-weights and spring grips; the "Church Invisible" where fortunes were told and the dead made to find lost objects; the "Tabernacle of the Third Coming" where a woman in male clothing preached the "Crusade Against Salt"; and the "Temple Moderne" under whose glass and chromium roof "Brain-Breathing, the Secret of the Aztecs" was taught. . . . He would paint their fury with respect, appreciating [their] awful, anarchic power and aware that they had it in them to destroy civilization.

Which, eventually, they do. The novel ends with a riot at a movie premiere, in which Tod is nearly killed and one of the characters is mistaken for a child molester and trampled to death. It's a vividly drawn scene, but it has nothing to do with the minutiae of the individuals who have clustered around Tod for 200 pages, even if they share a bit of the rioters' rootlessness.

The riot is not a well-plotted *deus ex machina*, not the daring strategy of a novelist with a deep political understanding of how private fantasy leads to public violence; it's the desperate act of a writer who's bored with his characters and can't think of ending the book any other way.

West's writing is never as funny as it thinks it is, and always annoying in doses of more than a dozen pages. Little of it deserves even to be remembered, let alone collected and exalted as classic. The esteem in which it's currently held owes to several factors: First, West's engaging personality, which led to a generous, forgivable confusion between the quality of the man and the quality of the work. Second, his early death, which made West's *potential* seem *actual* and allowed his fans to assume, against all evidence, that hypothetical great works had been on their way.

But finally, and disturbingly, West benefits from his very adolescent shallowness and simplicity, which makes it possible for high-school students to "get" his novels in the way they won't get George Eliot's. His work is pitched to a television-bred attention span. It is didactic enough for a reading public that has almost all of its engagement with "serious literature" in high school and college, when minds are most amenable to propaganda.

Novels such as West's get taught because they are parodic picaresques that can be fitted into the schema of a *Candide*-to-*Catch-22* satire course taught to high-school seniors. It's not that they're good, it's just that they're extremely amenable the flog-you-over-the-head-with-it pedagogy that's been fashionable for so long now that it can safely be called the American model for teaching literature. ♦

A Wobbly Tome

J. Anthony Lukas's Posthumous 'Trouble'

By Woody West

Those who've done penance by editing on a newspaper city desk know the phenomenon: an exuberant reporter who simply empties his notebook into the story, leaving out nothing—*nothing*. The methodology of J. Anthony Lukas in his 843-page *Big Trouble* is similarly undisciplined.

J. Anthony Lukas
Big Trouble
A Murder in a Small Western Town Sets Off a Struggle for the Soul of America
Simon & Schuster, 843 pp., $30

The book is the valedictory of the former *New York Times* reporter who won both a Pulitzer prize and a National Book Award for *Common Ground*, a journalistic account of the Boston school integration furor of the 1970s. Lukas killed himself earlier this year at the age of 64, shortly after finishing this new book. He had suffered from depression for years.

No one can fully know another's personal demons; however, a friend attributed his suicide to fear that *Big Trouble* would be roughly handled by critics. That's doubtful. *Big Trouble* is in a tradition beloved of prize-givers and it surely will be awarded one or two—for its progressive interpretation of a slice of the American past and/or in memoriam to the author.

The book is subtitled "A Murder in a Small Western Town Sets Off a Struggle for the Soul of America," and as a general thing it is well to be suspicious of books invoking the American soul. Its pivotal event is the assassination of Frank Steunenberg, the 44-year-old former governor of Idaho, on the evening of December 30, 1905. A bomb rigged to his front gate detonated as he returned to his home in the town of Caldwell.

Eventually, three leaders of the

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Western Federation of Miners, most notably Bill Haywood, were tried for having had the assassination carried out by agents of the union—a union sufficiently radical that Samuel Gompers of the American Federation of Labor maintained a careful distance from it.

Haywood's defense was headed by Clarence Darrow, the country's most celebrated lawyer. Investigation of the killing was led by a renowned detective, James McParland of the Pinkertons, who undercover had been instrumental in breaking up the Pennsylvania terrorists called the "Molly Maguires."

The actual assassin was Harry Orchard (two named accomplices were never charged). Nabbed by McParland, Orchard told everything except his weight at birth. His confession implicated Haywood and the two other union officials.

Prosecutors were convinced immediately that the Western Federation of Miners was behind the Steunenberg murder. During bitter mining wars in the state in 1892, Steunenberg as governor, though considered politically moderate, had sent troops to control the strikers.

In his introduction, Lukas writes that while working on his Boston school-integration book, he realized that class as much as race was involved (which isn't exactly a remarkable insight). He decided for *Big Trouble* "to pick this [class] thread from a social fabric so professedly egalitarian" as this country's.

He chose the 1899-1907 period in the Rocky Mountain states, a time when there was fear that conflict between labor and capital was reaching "a critical intensity that might plunge the nation into ruinous class war." The class theme, Lukas felt, was pertinent now "when the gap between our richest and poorest citizens grows ever wider." That is debatable, not to put too fine a point on it, but it is the party line.

A major problem with *Big Trouble* is that Lukas facilely divides the turn-of-the-century landscape of a dynamic and complex society into one of wage slaves versus plutocrats—no middle term in his equation. Thus, he ignores the most remarkable fact of the capital consolidation of those years, especially in the West: the permeable nature of "class" in America and the dramatic growth of the middle class that sustained one of history's dramatic economic and cultural evolutions. Fitful and ragged as that evolution was, it precluded the sealed socioeconomic compartments necessary to produce genuine class warfare.

Certainly there was a pulsating vein of concern about the possibility in those years. Certainly, too, the clash of labor and capital was intense, harsh, and often violent—the Haymarket riots, the Pullman and Homestead strikes, and Colorado's Cripple Creek mining eruptions among the nastiest.

The active and articulate anti-capitalist hive of the time, however, as Lukas notes, was so internally fractious and antagonistic that unity of action was moot against the arsenal of money and power at the command of capital. Both sides, in other words, played very rough.

But, in addition to the asserted theme of class warfare, the book is vastly out of proportion because of the excessive canvas upon which Lukas splashed his paint. He was clearly a tenacious reporter. His research was prodigious. But J. Anthony Lukas was a bird dog that could not hold a point, feverish to locate every quail in the county.

For example, at one point he goes into tedious length, in the neighborhood of 12,000 words, on the history and politics of blacks in the military, including a detailed account of the Spanish-American War, the use of all-black regiments during the 1890s mining strikes, and the vicious resentment against the units sent to Idaho after the Steunenberg murder. This is interesting stuff, germane to his book—but severely overdone.

There are similar divagations on the prominence of private detective agencies such as the Pinkertons in those years. There's a long section on baseball, pegged to the great Walter Johnson's early career in Idaho during the period. There are 5,000 or so words on development of America's railroads and their technology. As further narrative sinkholes, there are extended biographical profiles or sketches of (it seems) half the residents in Idaho in these years, those in any way involved in the murder case, and those who simply attract the author's interest. A short list includes: Presidents McKinley and Roosevelt; E.H. Harriman and Ethel Barrymore; magazine editor S.S. McClure, newspaperman William Allen White, socialist Eugene Debs; Gifford Pinchot, the forest conservationist; and Hugo Munsterberg, one of the early psychologists to dance his jig in a criminal law courtroom.

As the book makes its way to the end, the defendants go through a three-month trial and Darrow's 11-hour summation to the jury. Haywood was found not guilty. A few months later a jury cleared a second union official, while charges were dropped against the third. Orchard himself was convicted, his death sentence commuted to life, and the bomber died in the Idaho penitentiary in 1954 at the age of 88.

But were Haywood and his union colleagues innocent? Haywood would, of course, become even more radical as a Wobbly leader and eventually flee to the Soviet Union, where he died and was buried in the Kremlin beside John Reed. Lukas in an epilogue excavates from his research some circumstantial bits and pieces that fairly persuasively suggest that the jury got it wrong.

Big Trouble almost defies the reader to slog through the disjointed narrative. Too bad, because there's a good reportorial yarn here, if not a solid historical treatment—if an editor had reduced *Big Trouble* by two or three pounds. ♦

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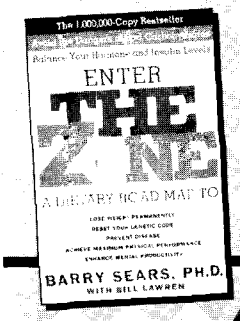

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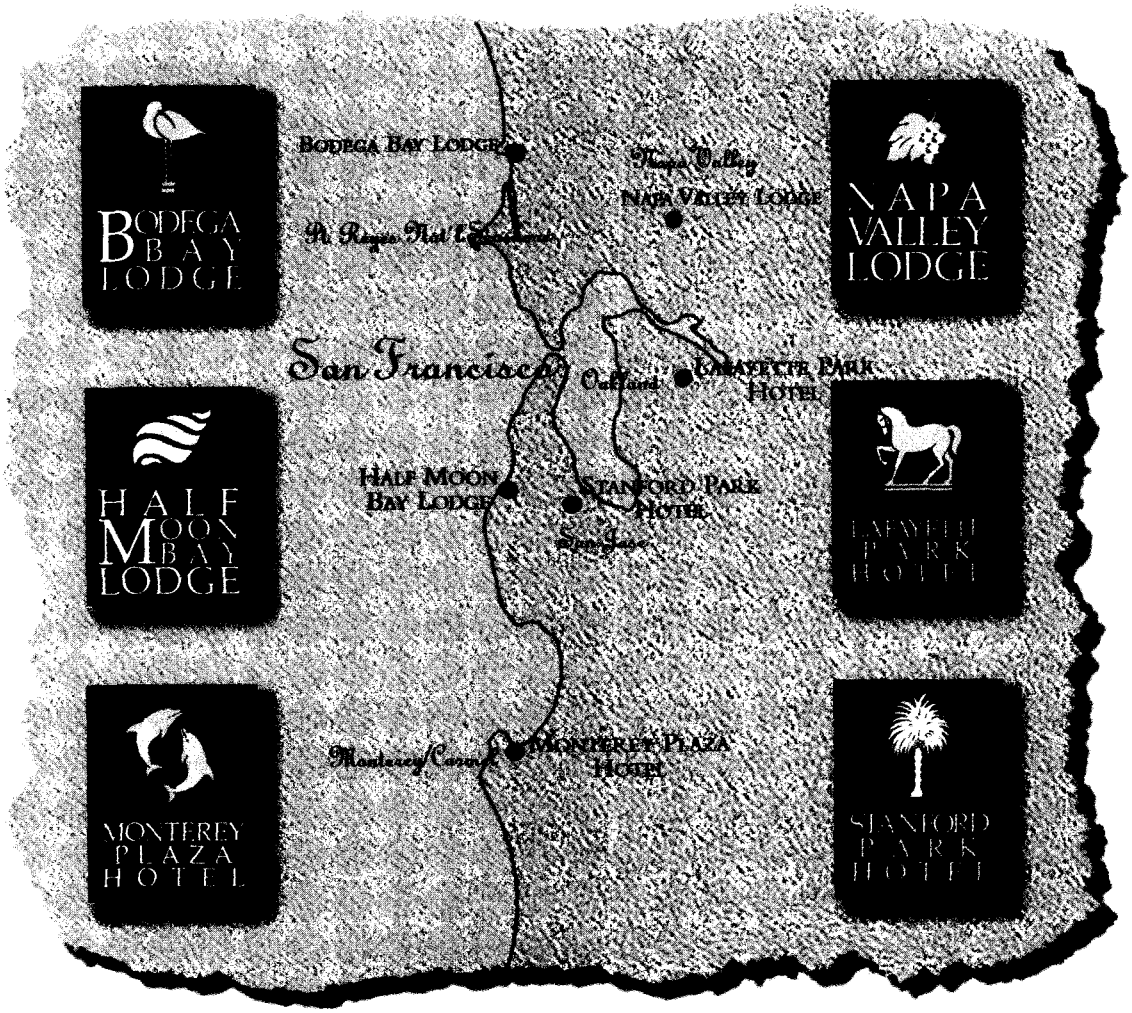

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